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ABSTRACT

This report contains the findings of two task forces established during 1994 by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence: (1) the Task Force on Improving Kentucky Schools; and (2) the Task Force on Restructuring Time and Learning. The task forces, comprised of parents and business members of the Prichard Committee, examined key elements of Kentucky's public education system and offered recommendations for improvement. Following an introduction that reviews education reform in Kentucky, chapters cover the following topics: assessment and accountability, school-based decision making (SBDM), the primary school, teacher education, professional development, and the effective use of time and schools. Appendices contain information on mediation, answers to commonly asked questions about SBDM, recommendations from the report "The Implementation of Kentucky's Primary Program," a report of the governor's task force on teacher education, modified task-force recommendations, case studies, and a review of research on homework. (LMI)

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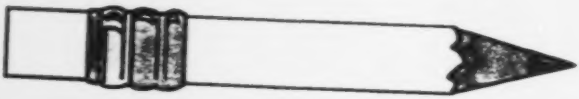

Five Years Down the Road to Better Schools

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The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence

KEEPIN' ON

Five Years Down the Road to Better Schools

Reports of

The Task Force on
Improving Kentucky Schools

and

The Task Force on
Restructuring Time and Learning

Published by:

The Prichard Committee
for Academic Excellence

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Preface

We'll just "keep on keepin' on," Lois Combs Weinberg of Hindman says. Like her fellow volunteers, Lois, a member since 1980 and chair of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence from 1992 to 1994, knows what it means to labor over a problem that has been with us forever—Kentucky's poor schools. "Keepin' on" is the challenge that Kentucky must meet until all the children in the Commonwealth have the schools they deserve. The start has been heroic; the hard part will be to continue.

This report contains the findings of two task forces established in the summer of 1994, and reflects the Prichard Committee's determination to continue. Both task forces were composed of parent and business members of the Prichard Committee, an independent organization of volunteers with no governmental affiliation, who have been advocating for vastly improved public education since 1983.

Both task forces reviewed the vast quantities of research by scholars in Kentucky and across the nation. They met with Kentucky educators, who served as advisors along the way, visited schools, and talked with state officials. We deeply appreciate the dedicated professionals whose contributions to our thinking were so important. (A list begins on page iv.)

The Task Force on Improving Kentucky Schools was chaired by William Wilson. The Task Force on Restructuring Time and Learning was chaired by James Wiseman. Thanks to both for their exemplary volunteer leadership.

These groups were appointed by William H. McCann, Prichard Committee chair, to examine key elements of Kentucky's system of public schools and make recommendations for improvement. This strategy was consistent with the Committee's previous approach. In 1981 and again in 1985 it assembled concerned Kentuckians who, based on their insights as parents and citizens, published their hopes for and opinions on improving Kentucky education. *In Pursuit of Excellence* (1981) and *The Path to a Larger Life* (1985), plus numerous other reports, have been published using this process of information gathering and reflection.

The charge to the task forces was as follows:

> These groups should conduct a conversation, as parents and volunteers, with others in Kentucky about the continuous improvement of Kentucky schools. This means improving the reform law itself. In some cases this will also mean putting suggestions on the table that are not there now.

It is self-evident that the need for change in schools is constant. Change is steady work, a process of constantly keeping up with the times. It is also self-evident that Kentucky needs a process of learning from experience. But we must

do this in a rational way. This is a complex task because this is a complex reform, without doubt the most sweeping, comprehensive, and difficult being attempted in the nation.

The topics covered in this report seemed to the parents and citizens who prepared it to be the most pressing if Kentucky is to continue to improve its public schools. They also addressed those reform elements that are most controversial or difficult to achieve, and found incidentally that the vast majority of reform elements are not controversial. Most of the work that remains to be done to improve Kentucky's schools is work in the classroom.

Our task forces also did not attempt a comprehensive review of the condition of Kentucky education or a thorough study of all of the many components that make up Kentucky's comprehensive education reform agenda. They did not make recommendations on every educational topic. The task force members did not see the need for such coverage, and that was not their charge; nor did they believe that they could be well informed on every topic.

The reader who wants to explore educational subjects not covered in this volume will find many other sources of information beginning with the thorough reviews of research compiled by the Kentucky Institute for Education Research and the joint University of Kentucky/University of Louisville Center for the Study of Educational Policy.

One subject that deeply concerns us—the need for increased engagement of parents in the education of their children—has been dealt with in another form, as a plan to be implemented by the Prichard Committee. It is not included in this volume, but is available to the interested reader by request from the Prichard Committee.

Neither have we addressed the financial condition of education. We want the goal of adequate and equitable funding demanded by the 1989 Supreme Court decision to be achieved. We also recognize that Kentucky's tax system does not generate revenue that grows as the economy grows, and that this system is not adequate to properly fund public schools over time. The task forces, however, were not charged with analyzing tax issues and suggesting solutions. This complex topic will require another forum.

In addition, this report does not adopt an approach common in news media reporting on Kentucky school reform, a "for or against KERA" format. We believe that this approach oversimplifies immensely complex issues, belittles the public's ability to absorb complex information, and replaces informed citizen discussion with polarizing rhetoric. We fully acknowledge that the desire for simple "pro" or "con" answers, for simple and final solutions, is extremely powerful. But we also believe that these unrealistic expectations greatly diminish the prospects for serious change in complex systems like public education.

Our analysis and recommendations, in many cases, confront questions for which there are no single correct answers. This reflects reality, even if it makes us uncomfortable. But we believe that successful education should prepare the

citizens of a democracy to see complex issues from different perspectives, to weigh various imperfect solutions, and to make their best judgments, based often upon incomplete information.

This report then is presented as the attempt by one group of citizens to wrestle with the most compelling challenge facing this Commonwealth—the creation of public schools that teach all children at the very highest levels they are capable of attaining.

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
December 1995

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The Prichard Committee Task Force on Restructuring Time and Learning

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The Lawyers for School Reform

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The Lawyers for School Reform Study Group on Dispute Resolution: E. Joy Arnold; Rita Caufield; Teresa Combs; Karen Jones; J. Stephen Kirby; Cheryl Lewis; Judy Jones Lewis; Patti Magruder; Teresa Combs Reed; Pam Weeks; Susan Perkins Weston; Wayne Young, and Karen Zerhusen, consultant.

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Introduction

In this report we suggest ways to improve schools for all Kentucky children. This cannot be done in a vacuum. When the Prichard Committee published reports in the 1980s, its recommendations for correcting deep deficiencies in Kentucky schools were written on an empty slate. This is no longer the case. The recommendations we make now must be set in the context of implementing the nation's most sweeping, contentious, and difficult reform. Kentucky educators and parents are in the middle of a very complex task where technical issues and political issues overlap, and both are hotly debated.

The contentiousness of this public debate is a sign, in our view, that serious changes are working through the educational system. Change is painful and personal for the people doing it; tranquility isn't expected.

The effort that Kentuckians began in the 1980s to vastly improve their public schools and to reverse decades of education malnutrition will never be completed. Schools, like other institutions, will never reach perfection; they must always respond to new conditions. It follows that specific educational approaches and programs contained in the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 will need constant modification.

Kentucky school reform followed years of citizen and parent frustration with inadequate public education. Through the 1980s most Kentucky parents and business people came to believe that there was a direct connection between education and economic development. They were outraged at having their state called an educational backwater and at having the nation's most poorly educated workforce. They believed that Kentucky's place in the nation's education cellar resulted in its high levels of poverty, poor health, and weak civic conditions. That citizen energy fueled a political movement. That citizen movement led to school reform.

Reform also followed from a 1989 Kentucky Supreme Court decision that declared the state's entire system of public schools unconstitutional. The court fixed responsibility for correcting inadequate educational conditions on the Kentucky General Assembly.

The legislature's remedy for Kentucky's educational malnutrition was the Kentucky Education Reform Act. That reform, according to the legislative plan, was to be implemented by 1996. While six years appeared to be a long period of time to legislators, in reality it is only a short moment in the history of a massive public education system. In fact, 1996 is the real beginning of reform, since only then are all the pieces to be in place, ready to start working.

Realistic or not, the end of this 6-year period draws near, providing a logical time for reflection and rethinking. It seems timely and sensible, therefore, to think about ways to continue improving Kentucky schools in the context of this sweeping reform.

It also makes sense, we believe, to think of such continuous improvement based on the massive amounts of work already done. So we begin in this report with observations on what has been done by Kentucky educators since 1990.

What Has Been Done

The implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act is generating more research, study, data, and discussion than any topic in the modern history of this Commonwealth. Dozens of books, research papers, and doctoral dissertations are being written by scholars across America and here in Kentucky. Entire institutions have been established to monitor and study Kentucky school reform. The Office of Education Accountability and the Kentucky Institute for Education Research have completed serious analysis, and more is on the way. The University of Kentucky and University of Louisville have established the Joint Center for the Study of Educational Policy. The Prichard Committee has conducted its own research with foundation support.

A 1994 summary of research on Kentucky school reform includes 176 studies (Joint Center, 1994). This research, representing knowledge gained from implementing the Kentucky Education Reform Act, did not exist in 1990 when this law was adopted by the General Assembly. It could not, therefore, have informed legislative decision-making. But it would be foolish not to use it now.

We believe that all discussions about continuous improvement of Kentucky schools should be based upon such research evidence. Many decisions about education made in the political process, similar to those on other difficult topics such as health care and welfare policy, can often be emotional, personal, and politically volatile. Such decisions made solely on emotion, personal or political grounds, are often weak, poorly conceived, careless, and must be corrected later.

We believe that the wisest and most helpful political decisions about Kentucky education will be made based on informed discussions and documented data, and will take advantage of what is known after five years of experience and research. In short, decisions should be based on the best available evidence.

As we review what Kentucky has done, let's first stand back and look at the big picture. At first glimpse, like other parents and citizens, we might notice only the emotional topics of the moment—headlines, for instance, about test scores. But these topics are only a small part of Kentucky education.

Looking at the big picture, we see that the nature of public discussion about education, and the principles that make up that discussion, have changed dramatically. Throughout the 1980s the volunteers on the Prichard Committee tried to stimulate conversation about how to improve Kentucky's schools. That goal has been achieved.

The conversation between educators and citizens, in civic and community groups and in legislative committees, is remarkably different than anything witnessed in the 1980s. This new conversation focuses on solutions, not just

problems, in a climate of positive forward motion that did not exist prior to 1990. In many schools teachers now talk, as one told us, "more about how children learn than how many crayons to buy." Public discussion is focused on complex education topics and strategies that are well understood in only a few places across America. It is not unusual, for example, to see thoughtful professionals and citizens engaged in discussion about the proper balance between school level and district level authority, how to interpret test data so schools can improve instruction, or how to reshape central educational bureaucracies. For outside observers, the level of Kentuckians' discourse about complex topics is remarkable.

Looking at the changes in the big picture since 1990 we also see several principles that have by and large been absorbed into the culture:

- The Supreme Court's view that a "child's right to an adequate education is a fundamental one under our Constitution" and the court's seven capacities of quality education for "each and every child" have been incorporated into the thinking and accepted in principle by those with influence over education. Using the court's 1989 language, the capacities are:

- (I) sufficient oral and written communication skills to enable students to function in a complex and rapidly changing civilization; (ii) sufficient knowledge of economic, social, and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices; (iii) sufficient understanding of governmental processes to enable the student to understand the issues that affect his or her community, state, and nation; (iv) sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental and physical wellness; (v) sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage; (vi) sufficient training or preparation for advanced training in either academic or vocational fields so as to enable each child to choose and pursue life work intelligently, and (vii) sufficient levels of academic or vocational skills to enable public school students to compete favorably with their counterparts in surrounding states, in academics or in the job market.
- The principle that schools and teachers should be accountable and responsible for the quality of their teaching and other educational practices has generally been accepted. The details of an accountability system are still being debated.
- The concept that the entire education system, not just one piece or program, must be changed in a systemic and comprehensive way has been accepted. Likewise, there seems to be general concurrence that many years will be required for serious change and that quick and

simple fixes will not work. Patience with the length of time required for change has been higher than expected.

- The largest portion of the educational community has accepted reform as inevitable and desirable. When asked: "Would you return to the old ways?" most educators say "no." Educators are also favorable to most elements of reform even though they may object to some parts, such as new accountability requirements. (Survey, Wilkerson and Associates)

- The importance of financial equity among schools and equity in educational opportunity for every child, no matter where the child lives, has been generally agreed upon by the people of the Commonwealth. The concepts that decision making and accountability should be pushed from the state to the local and school level and that the size and regulatory authority of the state's educational bureaucracy should be reduced have been accepted. (It is obvious, however, that what this principle means in reality is still being debated; by their very nature, balances of authority need constant adjustment, and there is no "final" solution.)
- There is general acceptance of changes in state governance, such as the employment of a professional commissioner of education. Efforts to eliminate nepotism and inappropriate political practices have been accepted.
- There has been general acceptance of additional spending for schools and for the increased taxes that provided that funding. There has also been general agreement with improvements in property assessments so that all property is assessed at 100 percent of its fair cash value.

The Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 includes every law having to do with public education in Kentucky—from attendance policy, teacher licensing and personnel to retirement policies, taxation and tax collection. Public attention most often focuses on issues with high media visibility or personal concern, such as testing, financial rewards for good teaching, or the primary program. It's easy to miss the forest for the trees.

For a moment, however, let's stand back and look at the forest. Since 1990 we see, in reports from the Kentucky Department of Education, that:

- More decisions are being made at the local school level. School-based decision making councils have been established in 882 out of 1,247 schools. Almost 4,500 local teachers and parents are involved in making decisions at the school level.
- Total funding (state, local, and federal) increased by 46.5 percent since 1989. Per pupil school spending ranks 32nd in the nation, up from 40th in 1989.

- The gap in spending between the poorest districts and the wealthiest districts has been cut by 50.9 percent.
- Teachers' salaries increased by 20.3 percent overall since 1990, up to 40 to 50 percent in some counties. Kentucky teachers now rank 29th in the nation in salaries, compared to 37th in 1989.
- Over 75 percent of eligible 3 and 4-year-olds, more than 28,000 children, now are in preschool—that's up from only 29 percent in 1989-1990.
- Kentucky schools have one technology work station for every 16.9 students and one for every 5.3 teachers. (The goal is one for every six students and one for every teacher.)
- Family Resource or Youth Services Centers serve 862 of the schools.
- Extra hours of study and more time in school were provided to 105,000 students through extended school services.
- Nepotism in school hiring has been virtually eliminated.
- Citizens' panels are helping select local superintendents. There are 109 (out of 176) new superintendents since 1990.
- Several superintendents and local board members have been removed from office by the State Board of Education for misconduct, something Kentucky officials could do nothing about before 1990.
- A professional commissioner of education is hired and accountable to the State Board of Education.
- Rigorous learning standards have been established.
- And most important, learning is increasing and students have improved their performance on Kentucky's new test, the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS).

While KIRIS has come under serious criticism in research, and must continue to be scrutinized and refined, it is currently the only testing system available for measuring school progress. The test scores on three different KIRIS assessments over three years increased; only 55 schools statewide failed to see their students make progress.

Based on published research and on test scores, there seems to be no doubt that Kentucky students, particularly in the early grades, are spending more time on basic skills—reading, writing, and mathematical computation.

The Road Ahead

While progress under school reform is impressive, there is much work to be done. Public agreement is lacking on some fundamental concepts surrounding Kentucky public schools:

- There is, among teachers and the public, limited acceptance of the goal "that all children can learn and most at high levels."
- Not enough educators have accepted responsibility for engaging parents more in education; parents have not yet fully assumed their responsibilities for the education of their children. Likewise, the idea of broad community responsibility for raising and educating all children has not yet been absorbed into community norms and behaviors.
- A new definition of teacher work and responsibility, including agreement that more time is needed for teachers to relearn their professional roles, has not yet emerged.
- More effective ways to help teachers learn how to improve their teaching and shape instruction to each child have not been implemented as widely or effectively as needed.
- A method of adjusting reform without disrupting the work already underway has not been invented.
- The full meaning of decentralizing decision making, from state to district to school, has not been understood or accepted up and down the line.
- School councils have not realized the amount of independence available to them or the expectation that they can redesign curriculum and teaching to increase student learning.
- The public and parents have not yet agreed upon or understood all the aspects of Kentucky's new educational system nor do they all agree upon its educational objectives. There remains substantial misunderstanding and disagreement over "basics" in Kentucky schools. Likewise, many teachers using new approaches have not yet communicated with parents so that they understand what is taking place in their children's classrooms.
- The value of providing incentives, based on school performance, to leverage change across the entire system has not been agreed upon. Likewise, there is disagreement about the effectiveness and feasibility of performance-based testing as the way of measuring school performance for accountability.
- The concept that education is an infinitely expandable, unlimited resource, and the view that one child's gains in learning do not have to come at the expense of another child, have not yet been widely accepted.

These areas of disagreement or confusion are the topics that we explore in detail in the body of this report.

Beyond these areas, there are the changes that still need to be made, and measured, in order to take the reform legislation into the classroom. It is apparent, for example, that evidence has not yet been produced that definitively

proves great gains in student learning.

It is also apparent that the most visible results of reform have not required changes in teaching practices and have been, so far, the easiest to accomplish, even though they represent great progress for Kentucky schools. We now need to look for demonstrated progress at the classroom and child level. An effective assessment system, better and more complete numbers reported by the Kentucky Department of Education, changes in teaching practice, and time for those changes to bear fruit can bring about that progress.

The Neverending Task

The goal of Kentucky's Herculean educational effort is to see that all children learn and that they learn at a high level of academic knowledge and skill. Kentucky has never attempted or succeeded in achieving this goal in the past. Indeed Kentucky has been well known across the nation for its failure to reach this goal.

For all children to learn, schools must become institutions that concentrate on continuously improving themselves to reach high academic standards. Such schools identify their problems and then find the strategies and tools to solve them. The policies which we address in this report are meant to encourage this improvement.

Kentucky's educational reform policies, in general terms, follow a course that was captured by Linda Darling-Hammond, president of Teachers College, Columbia University. States, she said, are shifting away from top-down control of schools. Instead they are attempting to "direct the system toward developing the capacity of schools and teachers to be responsible for student learning and responsive to student and community needs, interests, and concerns." The need to be responsive grows, she reminds us, from the demand for a new kind of education based on society's needs:

> There is little room in today's society for those who cannot manage complexity, find and use resources, and continually learn new technologies, approaches, and occupations. In contrast to low-skilled work on assembly lines, which was designed from above and implemented by means of routine procedures from below, tomorrow's work sites will require employees to frame problems, design their own tasks, plan, construct, evaluate outcomes, and cooperate in finding novel solutions to problems. Increasing social complexity also demands citizens who can understand and evaluate multidimensional problems and alternatives and who can manage ever more demanding social systems. (Hammond p. 753.)

The Consortium on Productivity in the Schools also argues that the key to better schools "lies not simply in making a series of changes in governance, curriculum, assessment, the professional development of teachers, and other areas, but to ensure that these changes work in concert to transform the current organization and structure of schools into a continuously improving system." (Consortium, p. 5)

Attaining this capacity for continuous improvement is difficult in private businesses and even more difficult in large public bureaucracies such as education. Such change is hard and challenging work because little is known about how to do it. It also runs against the grain; it is contrary to political expediency, the political desire for quick and painless solutions. And the idea of continuous improvement, change that will never be "over," conflicts with our personal need for closure and for an end to the hard work and trauma of change.

The history of school reform underscores the difficulties of creating lasting and meaningful change where it counts most: in the learning relationship between teachers and students in the classroom. "Schools don't naturally re-pattern themselves when they confront change," writes Kenneth Wilson. "On the contrary, they tend by instinct to ensnare innovation in cultural and political gridlock." (Wilson, p. 134)

David Tyack and Larry Cuban, of Stanford University, have studied the history of reforms like Kentucky's. They address a fundamental puzzle: why, no matter how much big systems of education change at the "top," has it always been so hard to achieve any real change in what happens in teachers' classrooms? They compare this "top-to-bottom" puzzle to turbulence in the ocean: look at the top and see smashing waves; a little deeper there's some turbulence, but, deep at the bottom, there is dead calm.

This condition, they write, partly reflects the "time lag between advocacy, adoption, and implementation." Kentucky finds itself in this time lag now. It is a pattern borne out in reform history: reforms respond to problems; legislation is passed but "implementation has a momentum and schedule of its own," say Tyack and Cuban. Those reforms that lasted were "non-controversial," they "did not exceed the pedagogical speed limit, did not directly challenge the public's notion of what a real school ought to be doing." "Real school," of course, means a school that looks pretty much like those the adults attended when they were children. (Tyack and Cuban, p. 55)

In Kentucky we see that those changes that are the easiest to implement (eg. financial resources to create preschool programs) are well established; much slower and more painful are reforms that require people to change what they are doing (for instance, the primary school).

Jane David, in her research for the Prichard Committee, saw this, too. To paraphrase her observations, teachers know they are supposed to do something different, but they don't know how to do it. (David, 1993) Learning "how to do it" takes much time, and time is what the political process wants least to give.

Richard Elmore, a Harvard University researcher who has written widely about school change, says "new systems are implemented within the context of existing teacher knowledge . . . not surprisingly, the introduction of new systems of incentives doesn't change the way people think about their work overnight, and the processes required to change the way people think are often too complicated and too long term to interest reformers." As a result, there's little patience for the slow, slogging work that's required to help schools identify and solve their own problems. (Elmore, p. 37)

Another way of stating the challenge facing Kentucky is to find the right combination of pushing and pulling forces, or of extrinsic (incentive) and intrinsic (personal) motivations, to move the whole system toward increased academic quality. The right balance between these pushing and pulling forces could not have been written into law in 1990 because it can only be found through experience and research as time passes. Finding this balance requires learning from experience and making adjustments.

Topics in This Report

We now approach the sixth year of a change process that, if considered realistically, will take many more years to accomplish.

When, as citizens and parents, we assess where Kentucky stands, there is consensus that most of what Kentucky started in 1990 is not controversial and is clearly helping children learn at higher levels but also that certain aspects of Kentucky education need vast improvement or adjustment, based on research and evidence acquired over the past five years. These consensus issues are the ones the Prichard Committee addresses in this report.

Some of these are elements of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. Others, such as finding more time for student learning or teacher preparation, are new topics not addressed in the 1990 reforms that need attention. Most of the recommendations that we make require actions by state or local school administrators and not the Kentucky General Assembly. In fact, most of those issues that are highly visible to the public or most controversial do not require legislative solutions.

The topics which we have studied are:

Assessment and Accountability
School-Based Decision Making
The Primary School
Teacher Education
Professional Development
The Effective Use of Time in School

This report includes chapters on each of these subjects. Each chapter analyzes the issue, reviews the research evidence, identifies problems, and makes recommendations. It examines the issues that most concern the volunteer citizen members of the Prichard Committee and, we believe, informed parents and citizens across Kentucky.

This report is not intended to cover every aspect of Kentucky education. Since we believe that all schools should be engaged in the steady and continuous pursuit of quality, a pursuit that should never end, this report also is not intended to be a final document. Chapters will be added in the future as Kentuckians "keep on keepin' on" to create public schools that teach all children at the very highest levels they are capable of attaining.

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Section I

Report from the Prichard Committee Task Force on Improving Kentucky Schools

Chapter 1

Assessment and Accountability

Holding schools accountable for student performance is a new and challenging idea. It follows that devising an effective system of school accountability and assessment is one of the most visible and controversial elements of Kentucky's new educational system. The technical and political challenges are immense. When the technical and political come together, as they do here, the challenges compound for the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, a group of informed citizens who are not technical experts. For perspective, we remind ourselves that Kentuckians are engaged in a serious discussion that simply did not exist before 1990 because school accountability was not even being attempted.

The stakes are high. To a large degree, public acceptance of higher spending on Kentucky public schools (up 46 percent since 1989-90) was based on the promise that schools would get much better; credible testing is one of the ways to demonstrate such improvement to the taxpayers.

Kentucky is creating a new testing and accountability program to encourage students and teachers to reach higher levels of learning than ever achieved before. Accountability pushes educators and students. New tests measure school performance for accountability, and are the basis for financial rewards. Their purpose is to show the public and parents how well schools are doing at their job of educating students, and to provide appropriate consequences for schools that are effective and those that are not. The tests also are meant to drive instruction and curriculum. Because testing is driving instruction, and because it has real consequences for teachers, it is imperative that it be done extremely well and that it be credible.

But parents expect tests, in addition to measuring school performance, to provide individual scores and national comparisons for their children. The big question is whether one test can do all of this; no one knows for certain, but most experts are doubtful. The challenge Kentucky faces is being confronted all over America, as all states attempt to create high and measurable academic performance standards. Researchers who have studied the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) say that Kentucky should not go back to the standardized tests used earlier because they were damaging to good teaching. They argue instead that Kentucky must press forward in its attempt, begun with KIRIS, to develop

a test that genuinely improves instruction and measures school performance. They readily acknowledge that this is hard to do, given the state of testing technology.

Taken together these conditions affecting Kentucky—education the centrality of testing to instruction and accountability, the test industry's limitations for creating tests that Kentucky needs, and the political nature of decisions about testing—provide Kentucky decision makers and Kentucky schools with a serious dilemma.

Testing to determine how much students learn was controversial even before it had consequences for teachers. Kentucky began to require a statewide test in 1979. (Some school districts used standardized tests before then.) Three different tests were adopted and abandoned between 1979 and 1990: two versions of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), and the Kentucky Essential Skills Test (KEST). Before KIRIS, critics cited numerous weaknesses in multiple choice tests such as those used in Kentucky. Daniel Koretz of the Urban Institute (Koretz, 1988) observed that "there can be no doubt that current norm-referenced tests overstate achievement levels in many states, often by large margins." On Kentucky's 1987-88 test for instance, students in every school district scored above the national average. Critics, such as George Cunningham, faculty member at the University of Louisville, claimed the 1986 test was "seriously flawed." (*Lexington Herald-Leader*, August 21, 1986) Test bias, "dumbing down," narrowing of the curriculum, score inflation, and parent confusion were common.

Clearly change was needed. New testing came to Kentucky with the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. Debates over the new test have been particularly intense because, with reform, testing finally meant something—rewards and sanctions were to be assigned to schools based on student academic progress. With this decision the testing debate took on serious and new complications.

The idea behind Kentucky school reform is to set high standards and provide encouragement to teachers to reach all students—the most gifted to the least gifted—with high level academic instruction. To do this, academic standards were to be set and measured with a new test upon which rewards (incentives) and sanctions were to be based. Forty-nine of 50 states are currently attempting to set and measure academic standards. Kentucky, however, stands apart by tying financial rewards to test scores and other measures of school effectiveness. Political pressure for quick results makes investing the time needed to develop valid and reliable tests

difficult. Some researchers say that Kentucky has moved too quickly in its testing program because of that pressure. But we cannot allow this to be the basis for failure to make the best effort possible at creating effective assessment.

This whole process—devising a fair and effective system which includes a new test for assessing student progress and holding schools accountable for student learning with consequences—is immensely complex. It is the part of reform where the most divisive politics and the most thorny technical problems come together. In the end, decisions about assessment require political judgment. However, testing is also a technical challenge. And the technical expertise needed to create more authentic testing for American schools is, it appears, less potent than hoped for in the 1980s. This weakness then compounds Kentucky's challenge and makes it even more imperative that Kentucky stay the course.

Kentucky's task is difficult because it includes complex technical problems at the cutting edge of the nation's testing industry. It is also difficult because no off-the-shelf test exists, ready for classroom use. It is difficult because there is disagreement even in the business community over whether financial rewards are effective incentives for encouraging employee performance. It is difficult because Kentucky citizens and teachers have never before tried to decide what all students should know and be able to do, a task delegated to textbook publishers, national testing corporations, and individual teachers before 1990. It is difficult because standardized tests are misunderstood and confusing to parents and the public. It is difficult because many educators object to the very concept of measuring performance and giving financial incentives on the basis of that performance. It is difficult because teachers don't all know what to do in the classroom to reach new or higher standards. And it is difficult because it has become the most politicized element of education reform; David Cohen of Michigan State University says testing is at the center of a "ferocious polemical debate." (Cohen, 1995)

What's To Be Done

Virtually everyone making proposals for improving American education agrees that high academic standards are critical and that many paths are available to reach that goal. Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education in the Bush administration, writes:

> Is the goal—higher levels of academic achievement for all students—worth the effort? Absolutely. Although not every student will reach the highest levels of performance, all students can learn much more than they do now and improve their academic performance.
>
> Irving Louis Horowitz of Rutgers University has described the shaping of standards as 'a way of doing things by identifying or creating or constructing models of performance to which presumably rational persons can aspire.' Two points in his description bear remembering. First, identifying models of performance must be a process of continuous improvement; second, the models of performance that serve as standards must be better than common practice; they must be models to which 'presumably rational people can aspire.' 'Deep risks' must be taken in the process of setting and revising standards, Horowitz observes, but 'there are catastrophes in the failure to run such risks'. (Ravitch, p. 184)

To focus our thinking on this complex task, the Prichard Committee gathered and listened to experts in the field of testing and accountability. In June 1995, the committee convened an assessment forum with representatives of research centers, universities, and consulting firms all recognized for their expertise (Charlie Abelman, Harvard University Graduate School of Education; Eva Baker, Center for Research, Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, UCLA; Anthony Bryk, University of Chicago; Tony Cipollone, Annie E. Casey Foundation; Tom Corcoran, Consortium for Policy Research in Education; Jane David, Bay Area Research Group; Susan Fuhrman, Consortium for Policy Research in Education; Paul LeMahieu, College of Education, University of Delaware). In addition, two serious studies of KIRIS have been released in the past six months, one by the Kentucky Institute for Education Research and the other by the Office of Education Accountability.

From the perspective of the experts assembled by the Prichard Committee:

Kentucky's education reform (KERA) and its approach to assessment represent the most comprehensive and boldest effort in the nation to improve public schooling. KIRIS represents a significant step in creating new, more challenging assessments that can guide schools to help all students reach world class standards. Developing such a cutting-edge assessment system is an enormous challenge and, as such, will inevitably have flaws. The issues raised by KIRIS include some of the thorniest measurement issues in American education. As Kentucky learns along the way, so does the nation.

No major assessment has ever been built so openly or with so much scrutiny. Nationally norm-referenced standardized tests were developed behind closed doors. The familiar percentiles and grade-equivalent scores, and the construction of items in these tests, receive considerable technical criticism, and had they been developed as openly as KIRIS would have raised as many questions. The Kentucky Department of Education deserves considerable credit for providing data about KIRIS, involving many people in its development, and acknowledging that there are problems. In fact, these problems were anticipated by the legislation which characterizes the assessment as under development through 1995-96. Consequently, fixing KIRIS does not represent a change in course.

Some of the problems with KIRIS are easy to fix; some are more difficult. There is no question that improving KIRIS is worth the effort and that abandoning it would severely undermine the progress of KERA. It is clearly successful in sending a powerful signal to educators, students, and parents that schools must change—that there is much more to learning than basic skills and lists of facts. The only alternative to fixing KIRIS is unacceptable—a return to traditional norm-referenced tests which have a long history of narrowing the

> curriculum and impeding school improvement. (David, 1995)

In this arena the challenge to citizen volunteers on the Prichard Committee, who are not technical experts, is to select and address the topics that are most important without becoming bogged down in technical or administrative detail. Our goal is to encourage vastly improved public schools for all Kentucky children. An important method to achieve that overall goal is to perfect the assessment and accountability system. Many topics are important in the assessment debate, including many raised in the reports by the Office of Education Accountability and the Kentucky Institute for Education Research, but we as citizens need not address each of them.

Keeping our goal in mind, we make recommendations on these topics:

- Providing continuous improvement in testing and using research in an ongoing fashion.
- Making academic content more clear to teachers and parents.
- Retraining teachers to help students reach higher standards.
- Varying and expanding the measures that are used to evaluate schools.
- Finding effective combinations of rewards and sanctions.
- Devising effective interventions in schools so they will improve.
- Providing incentives that encourage students to perform well.
- Providing individual student scores and comparisons between Kentucky students and students in other states.
- Helping parents understand the limitations of testing and the nature of absolute academic standards.
- Confronting the political challenges of accountability.

Recommendations

Underlying all these recommendations is our commitment to the belief that public schools should demonstrate to parents and taxpayers, in clear and visible ways, what they are contributing to children's learning. Difficulties and the time required notwithstanding, we believe the pursuit of and commitment to school accountability is imperative and possible for improving the quality of education for all Kentucky children. We believe that the citizens of Kentucky, by their support of increased spending for

public education in the 1990 legislative session, expected improvement in education quality. Determining fair and understandable ways to show that improvement to the public is difficult and will take time, as seen in the events surrounding standardized testing over the past 15 years.

■■■ • **We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education accelerate the creation of information that clarifies academic standards, guides the creation of questions in KIRIS, and helps teachers understand the academic content and skills that they are expected to teach. This information may include curriculum frameworks, content standards, and core concepts that are basic for all students. This process should be open and public, engaging all who express interest, but should be primarily the responsibility of teachers. This should be done recognizing the need for balance between local and state authority. We recognize the difficulty as well as the need for this balance. There is a tendency for state policies and guidelines to be resented and criticized as mandates and for local authorities to be considered autonomous and absolute. Neither tendency is acceptable. Coordinated and reasonable consistency of school curriculum requires statewide policies and guidelines be developed with care and with latitude for local differences and initiative.**

■■■ • **We also recommend that the academic expectations created by teachers, principals, parents, and university professors in 1991 and then revised in 1993, be re-examined on a regular cycle, every four years.**

Rationale

Testing is influencing what happens in classrooms across Kentucky in positive ways. Students are doing more writing, more explanation, and more hands-on activities. However, there is concern that KIRIS, combined with directives from the Kentucky Department of Education, may have swung teaching too far away from basic skills and content knowledge toward an emphasis on problem solving and application of

skills. Ongoing research to verify the influence of KIRIS on classroom practices will be important.

The challenge for the state is deciding how to inform teachers about what they are expected to teach in ways that ensure they are adequately preparing their students for KIRIS without overly constraining school choices about curriculum. What is the right balance of basic skills, content knowledge, application of skills, and problem solving, for example? What is the best form for communicating curricular guidance that is neither too general to be useful (short lists of big ideas) or too long to be usable (detailed lists of everything)?

There is no easy solution to this problem. Every state faces this issue of what appropriate curriculum content is and who determines it. Until now these decisions have mostly been left up to the textbook companies and publishers of standardized tests. Teachers need guidance that falls somewhere between that contained in curriculum frameworks and content guides. The guidance needs to be supported by professional development. As more KIRIS items with examples of student work are released each year, teachers will better understand what they are expected to do.

Two special challenges have become clear since 1990. Citizens and parents have never before been engaged in the process of setting curricular standards. They left those decisions to textbook publishers and standardized test makers, and those decisions reflected national needs and markets, not local needs. Because setting curriculum is terribly important and reflects basic community values, it can be divisive and difficult. (This is probably one reason that parents and citizens were not engaged in the process before.) This divisiveness can, if permitted, disrupt all attempts to improve school quality and this must be avoided. Improving the quality of education for all students is a more important goal than adult debates over ideological or political issues. These debates should not disrupt the education of children.

A second complicating factor is that the academic standards that are tested serve as important guides to teachers. Teachers, attempting to carry out the mandates given to them, want and need clear direction; in the worst case they ask to be told, in detail, what to teach. When academic expectations are changed too often, it disrupts teachers' abilities to meet expectations and, in the extreme, provides an excuse to do nothing.

To see that students are educated well by teachers and that instruction not be disrupted, we recommend that Kentucky's Academic Expectations

be re-examined on a regular schedule, not haphazardly or for political whim, with teachers themselves most heavily involved.

[redacted] - We recommend that neither the legislature nor the Kentucky Department of Education lower academic standards. Instead, all energies should be concentrated on helping teachers and students achieve the high standards that have been established. To improve public and parental understanding of these standards, the Kentucky Department of Education should find additional ways to report student achievement to parents and, if technically feasible, provide more levels of achievement in reports to parents and the public. This reporting should identify achievement in specific basic skills in addition to those skills and knowledge that go well beyond the basics.

Rationale

The political impulse is to lower standards if high standards are difficult to achieve.

In Kentucky there are signs of this impulse in suggestions about replacing academic standards with required curriculum and adopting a machine scorable multiple choice test to replace performance testing.

The Prichard Committee understood the power of required courses when it recommended in 1981 that a precollege curriculum and admission standards for public universities be established.

Requiring courses, however beneficial, is not the same as requiring standards of achievement and is *de facto* lowering of academic standards. Academic standards and required courses are not the same. Academic courses (or content requirements) are meant to ensure that a student is exposed to certain material, knowledge, or skills. Academic standards, on the other hand, are designed to ensure that the student learns, masters, or demonstrates competency. A metaphor occurs in athletics: in teaching a child to swim the instructor both shows the student what swimming looks like (content) and requires that the student stay above water (performance standard). In the past, schools measured only content.

In a state like Kentucky, with historic educational deficiencies, a return to academic mediocrity or worse is totally unacceptable.

There is, however, much confusion about the standards that have been set.

Standards are not seen as valid when they contradict what people know to be true. For example, the standards do not make sense to people if students who graduate and receive college scholarships score "novice" (assuming they have put out effort on the assessment). On the other hand, if the standards are judged to be world class, they may not be too high regardless of public perception.

The reasonable appearance of standards is also a function of the confidence in the process that produced them, and of how they are measured, not simply what they say. Because the standards are high and their achievement is expected to take 20 years (and assumed to move in equal steps over that time), there should be consideration of more frequent and more attainable standards and perhaps more reporting levels.

[redacted] - We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education proceed by February, 1996, to make adjustments and demonstrate to the General Assembly and the public that the concerns raised in recent research have been successfully addressed. It is imperative that the basis for rewards and sanctions be reliable and valid when held up to the scrutiny of researchers and the public. Significant changes in the KIRIS assessment will be required, as identified in research. If the above is accomplished, there should be no need to delay or alter the schedule of rewards and sanctions. This recommendation is also based on the continued and on-going responsibility of the department to employ the best technology available as research advances the capability for testing. We believe delay awaiting technical advances would seriously impair the opportunity to fully evaluate the advantages of improving educational quality based upon an incentive program.

Rationale

The dilemma in the decision about whether to delay rewards and sanctions is that the Commonwealth of Kentucky has made a commitment to educators to reward good performance. On the other hand, the educational community, including state officials, has made a commitment to the public that improved performance will be demonstrated in an understandable way.

The two reports recently published (by the Kentucky Institute for Education Research and the Office of Education Accountability) argue that KIRIS is currently not reliable enough to serve as a basis for rewards and sanctions but that it can be made so by expanding the types of test items and by coupling KIRIS with additional information about schools. Adding multiple choice questions and other types of machine scorable items and reducing the weights assigned to the least reliable elements will also increase reliability, these researchers argue.

However, it is also clear that the national research community is deeply divided on these matters and citizens should be wary. Even the researchers cited above say that Kentucky's test is the best effort yet devised to measure student performance and that no other "off-the-shelf" test exists that is adequate to meet Kentucky's needs.

Other researchers have challenged the Office of Education Accountability's report as being irresponsible. Edward H. Haertel and David E. Wiley have written:

> We consider both inappropriate and irresponsible the report's allegation that KIRIS is seriously flawed and needs to be substantially revised and that the public is being misinformed about the extent to which student achievement has improved statewide . . . . (p.1).

> In Chapter 8, the panel offers a thoughtful and, on the whole, cautious review of the evidence available from other sources concerning changes in student achievement in Kentucky. They point out, and we concur, that changes in motivations, teaching to the test, increased familiarity of students and teachers with novel assessment formats, and outright cheating may all have contributed to measured improvement in KIRIS scores, but the relative magnitude of their contributions versus real changes in student proficiency are unknown . .(p. 7).

These and other comments critical of research on KIRIS and their recommendations underscore our thinking that continued improvement in the test technology is essential. However, the benefits of motivation, which appear to be generated by the accountability component in education reform, should not be jeopardized by delay.

Kentucky's testing system must be made as valid and reliable as possible because it is essential to widespread improvement in student learning, as evidence for rewards and sanctions, and as the linchpin for the 1990 political agreement to increase school funding through increased taxes. Researchers have suggested numerous ways that the test can be improved. The Kentucky Department of Education should proceed to make these adjustments and present them to the 1996 General Assembly.

➡ We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education proceed as soon as possible with research and development of alternative methods and measures to supplement KIRIS and with alternative recognitions of school performance as part of its regular planning process.

Rationale

It is suggested in the research on KIRIS that performance testing alone will not adequately measure school performance. States around the nation are examining a variety of other measures. Kentucky should join in that process.

Decisions about rewards and sanctions might be based on additional and more in-depth information about schools that are directly related to student performance, such as features of the school's curriculum, the materials used, and the kind of work assigned to students. These might increase the emphasis on results such as higher learning or work, attendance, retention, and transition to postsecondary education or a job, or add new non-cognitive measures. It might also include measuring the implementation of other components of good instructional practice that influence student performance such as the primary program, extended school services, and family resource centers. Expanding the information base for accountability lessens the reliance on KIRIS as the primary determinant. This, in turn, lessens the pressure for unassailable accuracy. By increasing the information base and the methods by which school progress is determined, the motivation and opportunity to cheat on the tests are reduced.

These types of information could be obtained by school quality review or inspectorate teams, similar to those in some other states and countries. These will provide a fuller picture of what schools are doing,

both for purposes of accountability and for providing information to schools on areas needing improvement. Some could also be gathered through surveys to researchers and to students. Different ways of defining and collecting this information should be tested on a pilot basis.

However, under no circumstances should the provision of assistance be delayed. There are only advantages to providing assistance to poorly performing schools, even if their performance has been inaccurately measured. All schools, but especially those with the poorest performance, can benefit from assistance and professional development opportunities. These should continue under any scenario.

[redacted] - We recommend that the types and nature of school rewards and sanctions be constantly scrutinized and that adjustment be made as needed.

Rationale

There are several questions about the current incentive structure that is part of the accountability system. One is whether the rewards and sanctions as currently defined operate as effective incentives for teachers to improve their teaching. Other questions arise about practices such as the way rewards are distributed within schools. For instance, should rewards go to schools or teachers, and what are the consequences of these decisions? Is it possible, for instance, that giving financial rewards to schools and not to teachers would be more popular with teachers and the public? Would changing this arrangement harm instruction? There are no clear answers to these important questions.

It is also possible that the formula for granting rewards may sometimes have negative consequences. Research on high school restructuring suggests, for example, that the heavy weight given to KIRIS as opposed to student retention encourages high schools to push students out of school (Fischetti, 1995). These consequences should be constantly monitored.

[redacted] - We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education, with widespread public involvement, devise methods for providing incentives for students as well as educators.

Rationale

There is concern, particularly among teachers, that there should be incentives for students (and/or their parents) as well as for teachers. In the national discussion of standards, incentives for students are being aggressively promoted by the American Federation of Teachers. The danger in our view is that providing meaningful and fair incentives is easier to talk about than to do. For instance, incentives are totally different for students in early grades than for those ready to graduate from high school. Many advocates of student incentives gloss over these differences.

However, consequences for students make sense when there is input from parents and when attention is paid to whether students have had the opportunity to learn what they are expected to know. Several states have adopted examinations required for high school graduation and these, although not without drawbacks, should be considered. Ultimately, it is employers, institutions of higher education, and parents who control real consequences for students. Communities and families must provide the most meaningful incentives for students; if the community and employers don't value learning, why should students? Consideration might be given to partnerships with parents, to criteria for graduation tied to KIRIS and perhaps to criteria for earlier transitions, such as primary to intermediate and intermediate to middle school.

[redacted] ▸ **We recommend that the Department of Education find ways to make test reports more useful to parents while being straightforward about what the KIRIS test, or any test, can and cannot do. This recommendation suggests that some improved multiple choice questions be combined with or added to KIRIS so that individual scores and some measure of national comparisons can be provided to parents, and that the General Assembly provide for the increased costs of such testing in the education budget.**

[redacted] ▸ **We also recommend that schools create their own ways to report regularly, clearly, and openly on student learning to parents and the public. This reporting should emphasize student work, not test scores.**

Under no circumstances, however, should Kentucky return to an examination that is totally machine scorable multiple choice and not based upon student demonstrations of high quality academic work.

Rationale

We make this recommendation because many parents express the desire for measures that compare their children with other children. Until a performance-based testing system in which parents have confidence and which measures achievement against an absolute standard is created, multiple choice questions will be useful. (About 70 of Kentucky's school districts use a multiple choice, machine scorable assessment, in addition to KIRIS, at this time.)

We make this recommendation mindful of widespread agreement in education research that traditional standardized testing has contributed substantially to the current problems in American education. Since such testing is damaging to student learning it should be used sparingly. Indeed, at least two researchers cited recently as critical of KIRIS were also critical of standardized testing in the 1980s, using similar language to criticize both Kentucky's old and new tests. Weaknesses in the fields of testing and psychometrics make reform efforts in states like Kentucky particularly difficult.

KIRIS results can be made more useful, but it is important to be prudent and conservative about what KIRIS can and cannot do. It cannot be all things to all people. No single test can serve all purposes including school accountability, guidance to teachers, diagnostic information on individual students, and results on progress for parents. It is important to communicate clearly which purposes KIRIS is designed to serve. Otherwise, unmet expectations will undermine its credibility.

Usefulness of reports is connected to what is included on the assessment. For example, items that assess basic skills and that can be reported separately would be viewed as useful by many. Similarly, reports will be perceived as more useful if they incorporate national norms, such as percentiles for example, by including test items that have been norm referenced.

Usefulness of results also depends on when the testing occurs. The choice of grades 4, 8, and 12 for the first developmental phase of KIRIS, chosen in part to mesh with the National Assessment of Educational

Progress (NAEP), may make less sense than testing that matches the organization of schools. For example, testing at the end of the primary grades (grade 3), intermediate grades (grade 5), middle school (grade 8), and grade 11 may be more useful.

Results also need to be reported in ways that communicate what is expected. Results must tell teachers whether their curriculum and instruction are on track and, if not, what they need to do differently. Educators must be able to evaluate the information they get back from the testing if they are to improve their practice. Teacher training and scoring are important parts of understanding what it takes to produce high quality student work.

- We recommend that the Prichard Committee create an Assessment Forum to help the Committee's citizen volunteers review KIRIS periodically and to suggest ways to continuously improve the measurement and attainment of high academic standards for all Kentucky children. The Assessment Forum will be composed of national experts (such as those already assembled by the committee) as well as the public and educators. The forum should assist the committee with its review of rewards and sanctions, alternative measurement, improvements to KIRIS, and student incentives.

Rationale

This forum will make available to the committee and to other Kentucky citizens the expertise needed to solve the difficult issues we have identified. It will give the volunteer members of the committee, who are not technical experts on testing, the capacity to examine new technical issues as they arise. It also will serve as a safe space for the public and parents to express their concerns and propose alternatives.

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Chapter 2

School-Based Decision Making

The 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act created school-based decision making councils intended to decentralize decision making and give people closest to students the authority to make important decisions. School councils are comprised of parents, teachers, and principals.

By the end of the 1994-95 school year, over 882 school councils had been established, with more than 1,700 parents, 2,600 teachers, and 880 principals involved in making important school policy decisions.

Together with accountability, school-based decision making forms the underpinning of a new education system designed to increase the performance of all students, guided by very high and challenging student academic standards. These academic expectations emphasize the need for students to deeply understand concepts, basic skills, and subject matter, and to apply new knowledge.

To guide schools in transforming their curriculum and instruction, the Kentucky Department of Education prepared, as required by the legislature, curriculum frameworks that communicate these goals, provide for professional development to support their implementation, require an ungraded primary program, and create a corresponding set of new assessment instruments that form the basis for accountability with consequences. The new assessments emphasize direct measures of academic performance and thinking, including portfolios and performance tasks.

Together with additional supports, including on-site preschool and family resource centers, these components form an integrated vision of reform. This is the context in which school-based decision making must be viewed.*

**This chapter relies heavily on three years of research on school-based decision making by Jane L. David for the Prichard Committee. We are indebted to her for her work and expertise in this area.*

Implementation Observations

The task force's recommendations regarding school-based decision making are based on research by the Prichard Committee and others, as well as on school visits, conversations with teachers and parents, four years of observing implementation, and personal experience as school council members. Our recommendations concentrate on the implementation of existing law, not on changes in the statute. We believe the key to success is effective implementation of school-based decision making. We therefore begin with a few observations that underlie the rest of our recommendations, much of which is drawn verbatim from Jane David's third-year research for the Prichard Committee.

As has been observed in other states where school-based decision making has been instituted, some school councils established themselves early and are functioning well. Others have been slow. There is widespread progress in establishing councils and creating the necessary policies to make them operational. However, councils encounter an array of challenges as they attempted to become effective decision making bodies. The focus of policy making continues to be on the non-academic issues of discipline and extracurricular activities, areas where council members are most comfortable.

here are two driving goals behind school-based decision making. First is the goal of giving local teachers, who are legally accountable for student learning, the authority and capacity to decide how to provide instruction. The core purpose of the school council is to change the school so that student learning will increase. Achieving this goal has been extremely difficult across the nation and in Kentucky. The initial legislative hope that knowledgeable, empowered teachers and parents would know what to do was overly optimistic.

The second goal is to engage the broader school community, especially parents, in schools. Two parents serve on each council; others may participate on committees. Engaging the broader parent community in schools does not occur simply because a school council exists. Increasing parent involvement remains a major challenge.

Even when councils have engaged teachers and the broader school community, changing traditional classroom practice faces challenges that will take much time to overcome. These include:

- **Understanding new expectations.** Teachers struggle to understand what they are expected to do, and how to tell if it is working. Parents struggle even more to understand what it means when grades, textbooks, workbooks, and tests—the familiar tools of the trade–seem to disappear.
- **Blending the new with the old.** Few ways exist for teachers and parents to learn how to blend what worked well in the past with new approaches reflecting up-to-date knowledge about teaching for understanding. District and state administrators are not always able to help, since they too are learning new ways.
- **Debating differences constructively.** The focus of most—although not the loudest—conversation about school reform is about best practice, not about personal values, and reflects genuine feelings of confusion and disagreement. These are complicated issues of real educational substance that have rarely been debated publicly in the past. No one believes that either basic skills or understanding and application are unimportant. Differences concern how and when skills and concepts are taught; reform allows for considerable variation in such timetables.

Where the will exists, differences can be constructively accommodated, as long as the debate stays focused on substance. For councils to continue to evolve in the direction of setting policy and creating committee structures in support of sound educational decisions, schools and their communities need:

- **Strong site leadership** from educators trained to inspire people rather than from educators who are traditionally trained in administration and building management.
- **Instructional guidance** that emphasizes appropriateness of different strategies for different purposes, blending the strengths of traditional schooling with new knowledge about teaching for understanding.
- **Opportunities and time to learn** for teachers, administrators, and parents, beyond a handful of days dedicated to professional development.
- **Survival skills** for the transition, including tolerance of uncertainty and confusion, and recognition of the time and

opportunities needed for everyone to reach new understandings about effective teaching and learning.

Important pieces of reform are still being put into place. The assessment system is evolving; curriculum guidance is developing; schools are taking more responsibility for professional development. In many ways, 1996 will mark the real beginning of reform—the first point at which all the key pieces are launched. Much of the current discussion about reform is focused on important issues of educational substance. As long as the debate focuses on substance, where the will exists, differences can be accommodated. This is the real groundwork for profound change.

In particular, our research found that:

- **Progress continues.** More schools are establishing councils, although the rate of increase has slowed, and councils are tackling more complex issues.
- **Focus is non-academic.** Most council decisions still focus on issues of student discipline, extracurricular activities, and facilities. These are issues that parents and educators care deeply about, and believe they can solve.
- **Limited parent involvement.** Parents running for council positions, voting in elections, and sitting on committees are still small in number and in voice.
- **Visible instructional changes.** Many instructional changes inside schools are visible and clearly traceable to reform. Teachers are asking students to write more, explain their answers orally and in writing, work in teams, and perform tasks similar to those in Kentucky Instructional Results Informational System (KIRIS).

Although many councils are in place, much work remains to be done to improve learning, the most important school council responsibility. Many council members lack the ideas and information, the belief that they have the freedom to risk trying new practices, or the confidence in their own knowledge to make significant changes.

Recommendations: Legal Issues

[redacted] - We recommend that no major changes be made in the statutes regarding school-based decision making.

[redacted] - We recommend that school districts and school councils adopt policies and procedures to implement alternative dispute resolution which includes mediation and other recognized conflict resolution mechanisms. Dispute resolution policies to be adopted by school districts and school councils should take into account the general premises described in Appendix I of this report.

Rationale

The Prichard Committee established the Lawyers for School Reform, a group of volunteer attorneys, to provide advice and assistance for legal questions posed by school councils. In the fall of 1994, the Lawyers for School Reform established two study groups to examine difficult legal questions. One group compiled a list of key issues raised by school councils and school districts and invited representatives of organizations with a direct interest in school-based decision making to participate in the discussions.

Although the statutes lack clarity regarding resolution of many legal issues, the lawyers study group determined that most of the questions could be resolved without changes in the law and that time and energy could be spent more productively in making school councils work within the framework of existing law rather than developing a more perfect law. Those findings are included in Appendix II.

The balance of authority between school councils and school boards has also been an issue. This question was addressed by a December 1994 Kentucky Supreme Court ruling (Board of Education of Boone County, Kentucky, v. Joan Bushee, et. al.) that stated the "essential strategic point of KERA (the Kentucky Education Reform Act) is the decentralization of decision making authority so as to involve all participants in the school system, affording each the opportunity to contribute actively to the educational process." It affirmed the authority of school councils, separate from school boards, to make decisions on issues relevant to the

school. The Court reiterated the responsibility of the General Assembly to establish, maintain, and fund Kentucky schools, and its authority to delegate any of these responsibilities to institutions as it deems necessary. The ruling then lays out the various responsibilities of the legislature, the State Board of Education, local school boards, and school councils, and ends by stating, "The legislature did not delegate the authority to the local boards of education to require approval of council actions."

We expect that these issues of shared authority will be worked out, over time, by the good faith efforts of school boards, superintendents, and school councils, and also by the courts. We do not believe further legislative actions are needed regarding this balance of authority.

We are aware that proposals are being discussed to increase participation by parents in school councils and in the education of their children. Parent participation is essential to improving education for Kentucky children. We are not confident at this time that legislative changes in the composition of councils will significantly improve school-based decision making, and accordingly are not taking a position or attempting to write our own legislative language.

A second Lawyers for School Reform study group focused on alternative dispute resolution and mediation. To date, the methods used to resolve disputes involving students, teachers, parents, administrators, school boards, and school councils have often been inadequate.

In recent years, new methods to achieve conflict resolution effectively and efficiently have evolved. Collectively known as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), a variety of processes have been developed. Many of these processes have been used successfully in school disputes. The processes include binding and non-binding arbitration, private judging, neutral fact-finding, peer/lay/judicial/expert evaluation, mediation, conciliation, and consensus building. By definition, mediation is a private, structured, informal dispute resolution process which promotes communication and reconciliation of differing interests in a way that is acceptable to all involved.

New applications continue to evolve. There are many school-based decision making issues where consensus has not been reached, or clear answers emerged. This is expected. The courts will continue to decide on some of these issues, but we believe that educators and parents, with the goal of improved education for students, can work through many of them through alternative dispute resolution more effectively and without excessive expense and time-consuming legal action. (See Appendix I)

Creating Effective School Councils

There has been significant progress in implementing school-based decision making. Although the 1993-94 school year did not result in a large increase in the numbers of schools forming councils, those schools with councils began to take on a wider range of issues and a more complicated array of decisions. In schools where councils tapped into the essence of the Kentucky Education Reform Act—changing what happens in classrooms—they have strong leadership and strong committee structures that undergird council operations. They also have access to a variety of sources of new knowledge and professional development as well as effective internal and external communication channels.

The mere presence of a school council does not ensure change, particularly where the principal dominates. Conversely, schools can make major improvements in curriculum and instruction without a school council, when effective leadership is present. But without a school council, the possibility of significant improvement is beyond the control of teachers and parents. Given the critical role of school leadership, the fact that councils have the authority to hire principals when vacancies occur is crucial.

Councils can also guarantee that the parent community will have a voice in the process of change, even if it is not yet a loud voice. Moreover, a council can ensure ownership of an agenda for change that goes beyond the principal, so that inevitable turnover in principals does not halt progress. Finally, when a council and its committees function effectively, the council becomes a powerful vehicle for rallying faculty and parents around improvement goals. School councils alone cannot bring about school transformation. But without them, such change is less likely to occur.

Our research has shown that there are six characteristics of effective school councils:

1. Leadership that focuses attention on student learning.
2. Placing high priority on setting policy, coordinating, and approving recommendations.
3. A dynamic and interconnected committee structure.
4. An effective communication network inside and outside the school.

5. Strong parent representation on committees and communication with other parents.
6. Access to new knowledge and professional development.

We recommend the establishment of Principals' Centers for principals to learn about the new kinds of teaching and learning that underlie reform and how to best support teachers in changing their practice and roles. We believe Kentucky colleges and universities should establish such centers but should not be their only source.

We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education listen carefully to principals' concerns and assure flexible professional development offerings that minimize the principals' absence when schools are in session.

Rationale

In schools where councils are operating well and beginning to address the issues of change in curriculum and instruction, teachers and parents operate in committees, while the council focuses on setting direction, policy, and approving or rejecting recommendations. Such smooth functioning requires a leader who can inspire teachers; is sensitive to individual strengths and weaknesses, including people's abilities to work together; can bring everyone into the process, and mediates disputes as necessary.

This is a very different set of leadership skills than those that education administrators have been exposed to in university training or on the job. Administrators frequently receive more training in managing buildings than in leading and inspiring teachers. They are not trained to lead a process of collaborative decision making and organizational transformation, a task particularly difficult in schools where teachers are accustomed to working in isolation and parents are accustomed to maintaining their distance.

The authority of councils to select the principal may change the kind of people in these roles, but the number of openings far exceeds the pool

of applicants with these new leadership skills. Increasing the number of strong school leaders will require transforming administrator preparation and licensing, as well as creating more and different professional growth opportunities, including support and assistance, to those already on the job.

When principals were asked about their professional development needs in a January, 1995 survey conducted by the Kentucky Department of Education, they identified three training needs: curriculum, assessment, and technology. They also indicated a preference for sessions that were for principals only and that offered flexibility in scheduling, with more offerings in the summer months and fewer offerings away from their buildings during the school year.

[redacted] - We recommend that professional development be vastly enhanced so teachers, parents, and councils can learn these new skills.

Rationale

Even among teachers who have made substantial changes in their classrooms, questions and concerns remain about what is expected and what is best for students.

These are complicated issues of real educational substance. Both confusion and differences in beliefs can be resolved by providing opportunities for everyone–teachers, administrators, parents–to learn more about and discuss expectations for students and to learn new practices.

[redacted] - We recommend that local school districts and school councils reorganize themselves to use time more effectively, following the recommendations in the report of the Prichard Committee's Task Force on Restructuring Time and Learning.

[redacted] - We recommend that local school boards incorporate into their mission the objective of providing the resources—time, training, technical assistance and flexibility—so school councils and teachers can learn together and discover ways of teaching so all children achieve at high levels. Boards should also set academic goals and monitor achievement of those goals at the school level.

Rationale

Opportunities to learn new ways of educating children require time. Teachers cannot learn new ways of teaching during a mere handful of days dedicated to professional development. Learning new ways of organizing instruction, developing new curricula, creating new measures of student progress, and taking on new roles as planners and decision makers need to be built into the workday. Schools that have made significant changes in their instructional program usually have funding from special sources allowing smaller classes and flexible schedules and freeing up teachers to learn and work together on an ongoing basis.

Because teachers are the primary source of information for parents about curriculum and instruction, teachers' understanding of what is expected and how to do it is crucial, not only for changing classroom practices but also as the groundwork for building public support. Opportunities for parents and educators to learn about and discuss expectations for teaching and learning take time. Deeply-held beliefs do not change quickly. Such changes take time and training.

Without open debate, differences will be destructive to schools and therefore to student learning. Councils have an important role to play here, in facilitating discussions among school staff and in creating communication plans and opportunities for parents to learn. In the absence of new knowledge gained through direct experience, people naturally hold on to what they already know and believe.

[redacted] - We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education, school boards, and school councils focus training on the management of curricular and instructional practices and on strategic and long-term planning for improving student learning. This, and all other

training, should be on-going and continuous, not one-time workshops or consultations.

[redacted] - We recommend that parents be fully involved in professional development along with teachers, so they can gain a fuller understanding of the changes that teachers are making.

[redacted] - We recommend that parents and teachers engage in a dialogue about higher standards for students and how those translate into instruction for their children. More attention should be placed on engaging parents in the life of the school and in advocating for the education of their children. The Prichard Committee's Parents and Teachers Talking Together is a good model for encouraging this engagement and conversation.

[redacted] - We recommend that pre-service education for teachers and administrators provide training in school-based decision making and preparation for curricular and instructional management.

Rationale

The Kentucky education system asks for enormous change from everyone. Teachers are unaccustomed to collaboration and school-wide decision making; parents are unaccustomed to roles beyond advocating for their own children, and principals have not been in the business of building a community. Central office staff and Kentucky Department of Education staff are expected to have all the answers but they, too, are figuring out what reform means for them, as well as for those in schools.

Any change is uncomfortable. But change surrounded by misunderstanding, lack of knowledge, and uncertainty is particularly stressful. Yet a reform as complex and sweeping as Kentucky's by its very nature increases uncertainty and confusion during its early phases. It requires time for everyone to learn, to reach new understandings, and to continue to make needed adjustments that permit each school to create a learning environment appropriate to its needs. These are problems that

can be solved, and school councils can help by identifying where more information and knowledge are needed for their school staff and for the larger community.

The greatest threat to the potential of reform for Kentucky children lies in the tension between the need to view reform as developmental and dynamic and the pressure to judge every immediate step along the way to demonstrate results.

The need for information, training, and time is critical at this implementation point if schools are going to change to dramatically improve student learning.

Support for School Councils

➤ We recommend that districts with multiple schools form a council of school councils that meets regularly for training and sharing information. Smaller districts could form regional councils of councils.

➤ We recommend that districts encourage councils to join the Kentucky Association of School Councils to expand their opportunity to learn from other councils' experience.

➤ We recommend that school councils invite businesses to share effective management training and techniques as well as group process practices.

➤ We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education provide a checklist of characteristics of effective councils to every council for the purpose of self-evaluation.

➤ We recommend that a checklist of necessary and appropriate training topics be shared with councils as they decide how to use professional development funds.

Rationale

To become more effective, school council members need information and a greater understanding of how effective school councils should function. Councils that share with one another can learn from each other's experience and can get on with the business of educating students.

References

David, J., "School-Based Decision Making," in *First Year Reports to the Prichard Committee*, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, Lexington, KY, July 1992.

David, J., "School-Based Decision Making," in *Second Year Reports to the Prichard Committee*, the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, Lexington, KY, September 1993.

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Chapter 3

The Primary Program

The driving idea behind Kentucky's school policy is to encourage deep changes in the way children are taught so that all children will learn at higher levels. The primary years are the point, under KRS 156.160, where specific changes are required in teaching practice and school organization. The general goal is to tailor instruction to meet the needs of individual children instead of assuming that all young children are exactly alike. Multi-age settings offer the flexibility needed to accommodate a wide range of differences in children (Elkind).

The required components of the primary program include instructional practices that are appropriate for young children's developmental levels; classrooms that include children of different ages and ability levels; individualized instructional practices that enable children to progress at their own rate; assessment of students based on demonstrations of their ability; reporting methods that are more descriptive than a single letter grade; professional teamwork, and positive parent involvement. These components are overlapping and depend on one another for success.

There has been strong improvement in student performance in the basics (reading, writing, and mathematics) over the last three years. There has also been stronger improvement in assessment scores at the elementary school level than at other levels.

Several studies of the primary program show that teachers spend the largest part of the school day on reading, writing, and mathematics (Bridge, 1994; Raths and Fanning, 1993), the traditional basics. Furthermore, instruction in these areas is judged by researchers to be of high quality (Bridge, 1994; Kyle and McIntyre, 1995). The additional challenge for teachers, however, is to teach (and be accountable for) both basic skills *and* much higher subject matter content than ever expected before.

Researchers also say that the nature and quality of primary program implementation varies greatly from teacher to teacher and school to school (Bridge, 1994; Appalachian Educational Laboratories, 1993). But

research also shows that many teachers have worked diligently to understand, plan, and implement new practices (Bridge, 1994; Kyle and McIntyre, 1995).

Implementation of such a complex set of new practices is difficult for teachers. Some have mastered new instructional approaches; others have not. It is not to be expected that the primary program will be fully implemented in all schools in three or four years. Teachers need time to learn and use different instructional techniques. "It takes a long time," says Lilian Katz, professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois and the director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, "for teachers to change old habits." Treating each child alike is an old habit; designing instruction so each child will learn is the new practice. (Katz interview, 1995)

The changes created by the primary program are substantial and difficult. They have resulted in confusion and frustration by teachers and parents. For good reason, the primary program needs special attention.

Recommendation

- We recommend that the General Assembly retain the primary program, with the flexibility for school implementation adopted in 1994, and encourage schools, districts, local boards, and school councils to focus on implementing the program fully and well.

Rationale

On balance, there is clear evidence of progress in primary implementation despite much variation from school to school and several implementation difficulties (Bridge, 1994). There is also research evidence that primary school children are improving their basic skills (Bridge, 1994; Hovda, *et.al.*, 1995; McIntyre, 1995; McIntyre, *et.al.*, in press; Wells, in press), and no known research evidence to the contrary. Experience with nongraded programs in other states shows consistent positive findings (Gutierrez and Slavin). The results for students include improvement in reading, writing, mathematics, and social skills (Paven, 1993; Tanner and Decotis); better listening/speaking skills, writing skills, mathematics problem-solving skills, and citizenship (Tanner and Decotis); improved attitudes toward school (Paven, 1992), and success in meeting

students' needs (Anderson). A few early Kentucky studies are reporting children more actively involved with their own education with more positive attitudes toward school and higher attendance rates (Raths and Fanning, 1993; Oakes and Mann, in progress).

National and state polls show that parents and the public believe that children are not mastering basic knowledge. This concern has been present across America and Kentucky for a generation. Since the early 1980s, when reform efforts began, increasing basic knowledge and going beyond basic learning have been the goals of the school reform movement. It was to correct this deficiency that the Kentucky Education Reform Act was passed. No known research has shown, however, that basic skill learning has declined as a result of the primary program. "It is a myth," says one researcher, "that primary is hostile to basic skills."

While constant scrutiny must be applied to the effect of primary school instruction, particularly in basic skills, we see no reason at this time to alter Kentucky statutes regarding primary school. Great statutory flexibility already exists, providing leeway for schools to make their own decisions on grouping students. This flexibility, in effect, allows schools to use multi-age groups only a few minutes each day if teachers so choose.

In short, without research supporting a contrary view, we believe that legislative action weakening the primary program before it is fully implemented would have to be based on political, not educational, grounds.

Implementation

To improve student learning in primary schools, it is much more important to confront problems in primary implementation than to change Kentucky statute.

Good implementation requires leadership, professional development, and time. All are in short supply. Research in 1994 (*The Implementation of Kentucky's Primary Program*, directed by Connie Bridge at the Institute on Education Reform, University of Kentucky) identified the following issues:

1. The extent of implementation of the primary program remains mostly dependent on individual teachers in charge of individual classrooms. Observers found wide variations in practice among teachers within most schools visited.

2. In about one-half of the classrooms observed, instructional activities appeared to be related to Kentucky's Learning Goals and Academic Expectations. In the other half of the classrooms, observed activities appeared to have little or no direct relationship to the Learning Goals.

3. Progress toward implementation varies widely among the 31 program components. Some have been implemented extensively across the state; others have not. Key components that have been implemented in two-thirds or more of classrooms include:

a. Arranging a flexible physical learning environment.
b. Creating a warm and supportive social emotional climate.
c. Utilizing recommended best practices in the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics.
d. Collaborating with other regular classroom teachers in planning and implementing instruction.
e. Communicating with parents about the primary program and helping parents to support instruction at home.

Key program components that are still *not* being implemented in 40 percent or more of the classrooms include:

a. Designing and establishing a variety of learning centers.
b. Creating broad-based theme centered units.
c. Utilizing recommended practices in the instruction of science, social studies, and the arts.
d. Implementing a variety of performance and authentic assessment practices on a regular basis.
e. Collaborating or planning with special education teachers or other specialists.
f. Scheduling regular collaborative planning periods with other teachers.
g. Involving parents in meaningful classroom activities.

4. Three out of four schools are meeting the multi-age instruction requirement.

5. Although kindergarten (5-year-old) children are included in the primary program, the duration and frequency of their inclusion varies widely.

6. Four out of five teachers reported that special needs children (children with physical or mental handicapping conditions or learning disabilities) are included in their classrooms and that the predominate practice was to include these children in all instructional activities.

7. Teachers report limited planning time. Less than one-third reported joint planning time with other teachers during the school day. Another third reported only occasional joint planning time with other teachers.

8. Primary program teachers in 1994-95 showed marked progress in the implementation of key program components as compared with 1993-94. Even though teachers in the 1993 study were picked by principals as progressive teachers and the teachers observed in the 1994 study were selected at random, the data shows an increase in (a) integrated teaching and learning, (b) cooperative planning with other teachers, (c) the use of authentic assessment to measure learning, (d) qualitative reporting to parents, and (e) meaningful parent involvement in classroom activities.

9. When asked to rate sources of support for implementation of the primary program, teachers rated support from their principals and from other classroom teachers higher than support from external sources, such as universities, local cooperatives, the Kentucky Department of Education, and Regional Service Centers.

This study offers important recommendations with which we concur. They can be found in Appendix III of this report.

We offer the following recommendations regarding the implementation of the primary program:

School Leadership

[redacted] **- We recommend that new efforts be made to improve the leadership skills of principals and administrators. School boards**

should establish performance standards for school administrators and see that they are met. Principal training should be expanded.

Rationale

Teachers say that school leadership is the most important ingredient for the successful implementation of new programs (McIntyre and Kyle, in press; Kyle and McIntyre, 1995; Raths and Fanning, 1993; Raths, Katz and Fanning, 1992). Effective administrators have taken a strong role in identifying school needs, analyzing test data, securing good professional development for teachers, creatively arranging schedules, and providing support, encouragement, and resources. Training and support for administrators is a critical component to full implementation of the primary program.

Professional Development

- **We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education, the Regional Service Centers, colleges and universities, local boards of education, and local school councils provide training and time for teachers that concentrate on actual classroom practice. Teachers need training in the use of the Kentucky Early Learning Profile (KELP) or other methods that provide teachers the means to follow the progress of each child in acquiring necessary skills and to identify children with special learning needs.**

- **We recommend that local school boards, administrators, and school councils find creative ways to provide time for teachers to learn about the primary program and to plan and prepare for teaching in primary classrooms. Examples of schools and districts that have restructured their schedules to provide teachers with more time for professional development and planning should be circulated**

- **We recommend that good, usable materials, which have already been published, be more widely distributed to teachers. Model curriculum units, such as those developed by the University of**

Kentucky, should be made available. Regional Service Centers should identify such units created in Kentucky classrooms and distribute them. The Department of Education should make "Different Ways of Knowing" (DWoK) curricula affordable to more Kentucky teachers.

- We recommend that the primary configuration maps, which were developed by researchers at the University of Kentucky and describe full implementation of the primary program, be shared widely with elementary school councils, teachers and administrators, for use in understanding and comparing their progress in implementing the primary program.

- We recommend that school councils and school boards seek professional development for teachers in the use of technology to reduce the amount of time and paperwork required by the new reporting methods.

Rationale

Changing teaching practice in primary schools requires vast amounts of professional development. Despite substantial resources for such training, the need is not being adequately met. Teachers need more time, good usable materials, and examples of best practices to restructure classrooms. They also need technology and the skills to use it to do their work more efficiently. Also see Chapters 5 and 6 of this report.

Parent Involvement

- We recommend that schools commit fully to the principle that good communication with parents and effective encouragement of parent involvement is a high priority for the school and for teachers. Having a school council is not, in our view, sufficient alone for engaging parents as much as needed.

- **We recommend that a Checklist for Parents be developed by the Kentucky Department of Education and distributed to all parents to provide them with an understanding of what a good primary program should look like, including ways to determine whether their children are acquiring reading, writing, and mathematics skills.**

- **We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education and Regional Service Centers create sample report cards for use or adaptation that are clear in pointing out skills that have been traditionally considered "basic skills." Parents should be included in the process of developing these sample report cards. The use of the Kentucky Early Learning Profile (KELP) can be helpful here.**

- **We recommend that school boards and school councils use time more effectively and creatively to create better opportunities for parent/teacher conferences and other ways to communicate with parents. Examples, such as Jefferson County's two parent/teacher conference days, should be widely distributed.**

- **We recommend that effective school communication with parents about student progress in their academic work be a top school priority. Parents need explanations from teachers about new grading procedures; teachers should provide that explanation so that grading is absolutely clear to parents.**

- **We recommend that schools improve and expand communication between teachers and parents. (One model is the Prichard Committee's Parents and Teachers Talking Together.)**

Rationale

Research on primary program implementation shows that positive parent involvement has been slowly and poorly implemented by schools.

Parent involvement is a key factor in school success for children, and every effort must be made to bring parents into the process.

Multi-age Grouping

- We recommend that the Department of Education, the Regional Service Centers, and local administrators make requirements absolutely clear to teachers and parents: the law provides flexibility in grouping students—grouping students of two age levels is appropriate, legal, and perhaps more practical, for some schools and classrooms. However, teachers interested in implementing classrooms with more than two age levels should be encouraged to do so and be supported in their efforts.

- We recommend that professional development programs emphasize helping teachers with the knowledge and skills to implement continuous progress in their classrooms. The Kentucky Early Learning Profile is a useful tool for accomplishing this.

- We recommend that school boards and councils make full-time aides available to every primary classroom.

Rationale

Multi-age grouping is both one of the more difficult components of the primary program for teachers to implement, and one of the most controversial, difficult, and confusing aspects of primary school for parents (Jacovino, in press; Bass, Bibee and Heidelberg, in press).

It is well established that allowing children to learn at their own rate is good teaching practice. Allowing some children with gifts or talents to move forward quickly as they master material, while not penalizing children if they need more time, is the best way of teaching young children. (In the primary program, this is called "continuous progress.")

Multi-age grouping requires teachers to understand each student's learning level so that, in a multi-age group, the teacher can help each child progress at his or her own rate. Such thinking about learning levels that

goes beyond age and grade level is possible, but not likely, in single-age groups. It is more likely that teachers will teach to the middle of the class in a single-age classroom.

Because implementing the primary program is so difficult, teachers need assistance. Full-time aides can provide the help that teachers need in the classroom.

Transition to Grade Four

- We recommend that teachers in the primary programs and in the upper elementary grades work together to establish mutual academic expectations for students and for what is expected in the fourth grade KIRIS assessments.

- We recommend that all elementary school teachers, not just fourth and fifth grade teachers, be trained in and score writing and mathematics portfolios so that each teacher understands the standards set for student success.

- We recommend that communication with and training for teachers emphasize that all primary teachers are responsible for student achievement, not just fourth grade teachers.

Rationale

Student assessment scores demonstrate that fourth grade students are making good improvement in reading, writing, and mathematics. However, some fourth grade teachers report that students entering their classrooms have not been adequately prepared for fourth grade work and for the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) assessments. Communication among colleagues about common expectations for students, and a feeling of joint responsibility for every student's learning are central to success for students.

Kindergarten Inclusion

[redacted] - We recommend that the Department of Education and Regional Service Centers aggressively disseminate information to teachers about flexibility for grouping kindergarten students. However, schools should be encouraged to include 5-year-old students in meaningful activities with older students to increase the benefit to both groups of students.

Rationale

Many parents and teachers have expressed concern about the inclusion of 5-year-old children with older elementary children. The difficulties of grouping half-day kindergarten students with full-day students are also apparent. However, researchers report that kindergarten students can be successfully included in the primary program (McIntyre, in press) and a study in one school district demonstrated that when 5-year-olds were included in a well-implemented program, those children were better prepared for higher level work than kindergarten students who were isolated in a kindergarten classroom (Compton-Hall, Jukes and Newsome, 1994). There is wide latitude in grouping kindergarten students under the current law, so we see no need to change the statutes.

Teaching the Basics

The intention of the entire reform, including changes in the primary school, is to insure that basics, as well as subject matter and skills that go beyond the basics, are taught well to all children. Kentucky law is quite clear; it establishes that schools "shall develop their students' ability to:

1. Use basic communication and mathematics skills for purposes and situations they will encounter throughout their lives;
2. Apply core concepts and principles from mathematics, the sciences, the arts, the humanities, social studies, and practical living studies to situations they will encounter throughout their lives;
3. Become a self-sufficient individual;

4. Become responsible members of a family, work group, or community, including demonstrating effectiveness in community service;
5. Think and solve problems in school situations and in a variety of situations they will encounter in life, and
6. Connect and integrate experiences and new knowledge from all subject matter fields with what they have previously learned and build on past learning experiences to acquire new information through various media sources." (KRS 158.6451)

Because teachers have so much to do, the quality of teaching basic instruction should be monitored closely. One superintendent has argued that there is a tendency on the part of teachers to go to extremes. "It's like the swinging of a pendulum. For many years they've been teaching too much in a standardized and rote method, with no attention to individual children's differences, and they've been missing many children. Now, under the new primary program, the pendulum can swing in the other direction, and some teachers may go too far."

Misunderstandings or inadequate knowledge about teaching techniques can cause teachers to swing to extremes. In stressing writing, for instance, which teachers should do, it is possible to pay too little attention to the basic elements of grammar, punctuation, and spelling unless the teacher is skilled at balanced instruction.

The challenge is to see that the pendulum is in the middle, not at the extremes. Teachers need extensive professional development and time for practice and learning together, to achieve high quality instruction that teaches subject matter skills well. Recent and extensive research which describes how teachers successfully reach this balance shows it can be done.

A public discussion about teaching the basics has been difficult and confusing for many years. It has also been the subject of intense scholarship. We have found valuable the insights of Howard Gardner, professor of psychiatry at Harvard University and winner of the University of Louisville's Grawemeyer Award in Education:

> Both educational leaders and members of the wider community have often called for a re-emphasis on the basic skills. In large measure, this goal has been invoked in a defensive way. In apparent distinction to the students of

> earlier eras, our graduates are not able to read, write, or calculate with proficiency, so they cannot hold jobs, let alone be productive citizens in a community.
>
> To declare oneself against the institution of the three Rs in the schools is like being against motherhood or the flag. Beyond question, students ought to be literate and ought to revel in their literacy. Yet the essential emptiness of this goal is dramatized by the fact that young children in the United States are becoming literate in a *literal* sense; that is, they are mastering the rules of reading and writing, even as they are learning their addition and multiplication tables. What is missing are not the decoding skills, but two other facets: the capacity to read for understanding and the desire to read at all . . . it is not the mechanics of writing nor the algorithms for subtraction that are absent, but rather the knowledge about when to invoke these skills and the inclination to do so productively in one's own daily life.
>
> To attain basic skills requires drill and discipline. Yet the imposition of a strict regime clearly does not suffice . . .
>
> Indeed, the pursuit of basic skills may sometimes be counterproductive. In the effort to make sure that students "cover" the curriculum and are prepared for various milestones and tests, teachers may inadvertently be undermining more crucial educational goals (Gardner, 1991)

Gardner's observations underscore just how big the challenge is for Kentucky's primary school teachers. To meet this challenge, teachers need, in addition to time and professional development, understanding about what the KIRIS assessment data for their schools tells them about their own instruction and curriculum. Teachers need training and information to learn from test results so they can adjust instruction. Because this need is so important, we have addressed it several places elsewhere in this report. This task force has also convened an assessment forum to make recommendations regarding KIRIS and how to ensure a positive impact on teaching by accountability standards.

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Chapter 4

Teacher Education

The Prichard Committee has, since its earlier reports in 1981 and 1985, felt deeply that improving the quality of teacher preparation and professional development is an imperative for the Commonwealth. In that same period teacher preparation has also been of great national interest, a need virtually everyone also believes is a top priority. But progress across the nation has been slow, despite attention from national organizations like the Holmes Group and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

The need is particularly great in Kentucky. With historical educational deficiencies, Kentucky teachers should be even better prepared than the average so they can teach the many students who come to school from backgrounds that make learning difficult. Since 1990, with teachers expected to help students reach higher academic standards and with the measurement of academic performance paramount, the demand for improvement has a new urgency. As in the nation, progress in Kentucky on teacher education reform has been slow for several reasons.

First, teacher education is not usually the top priority on campus. It is the exception not the rule when college or university presidents lead teacher education reform efforts. Reluctance to change among teacher educators is also high and, without mandates from campus leadership, colleges of education have few incentives to improve. Where there has been change it has come because leadership was pushing.

Second, solutions are difficult and the steps to achieve teacher education reform are not clear. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that pre-service teachers learn to teach in *all* their college classes not education classes alone. In particular, responsibility for teaching prospective teachers subject matters falls on faculty in the arts and sciences. Faculty in these subjects advanced not by teaching well but by contributing to knowledge growth in their disciplines. Since new teachers model teaching they experienced across the campus, there is a need for vastly improved teaching in all classes. Such change is far too slow to

come. Ensuring quality teaching has not been a campus priority across the Commonwealth.

Third, the state certification process has historically been based on inputs—required courses—and not on results. With this lack of clear expectations for quality and performance, colleges of education have no target to aim for or standards against which to measure their success. "Improve," they might say, "for what?" Likewise, requiring specific courses has created a cadre of college faculty with a vested interest in protecting those courses.

Fourth, vastly improved teacher education, being difficult, the domain of entrenched tradition, and a low campus priority, has not had a reform champion. Governors, legislators, superintendents, and commissioners have seen no political pay-off in this issue. If an issue is to be tackled someone must lead the charge, but no leader has led the charge for improved teaching. In 1993 Governor Brereton C. Jones appointed a high level task force on teacher education that made useful recommendations. But after a weak attempt at passing reform legislation failed, reform enthusiasm died quietly. This was highly unfortunate; the quality of teacher education is central to the quality of schools.

Recommendations

The Prichard Committee, as an organization of volunteer citizens, believes that Kentucky must move forward with a forceful program of teacher education improvement. The goal in Kentucky is to vastly improve the quality of education for all children. This simply cannot be done without teachers who meet the highest academic standards themselves.

We believe that the solutions are to be found in the recommendations of the 1993 Governor's Task Force on Teacher Preparation (Appendix IV), with substantial modifications, in the directions begun by the Education Professional Standards Board, on some campuses (such as the University of Louisville) and in the vast teacher education reform literature published in recent years at the national level. There is no need to start from scratch, so we have not done so.

• We recommend that the goals and recommendations in the Governor's Task Force, with modification, should be pursued aggressively by the Kentucky General Assembly and the

Commissioner of Education. The General Assembly should charge the Professional Standards Board, and colleges and universities with clear responsibility for implementation, and provide a timetable for implementation that clearly sets standards for what is to be accomplished and when it is to be accomplished. The top priority should be on new standards for licensing and certification, based on beginning teacher performance, not course accumulation. This direction should make it absolutely clear that colleges and universities and the Education Professional Standards Board are responsible for improving the quality of teaching in Kentucky. The goals to be achieved, those we find most important from the Governors Task Force Report, are:

1. **The preparation of teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel should be aligned with the goals and objectives of KERA.**

2. **High standards of performance should be expected of all educators at all levels.**

3. **Certification should be streamlined and should be accessible from a variety of routes.**

Rationale

The basic framework for substantially improving teacher preparation is contained in the task force report. The challenge is to find a way to implement its most important recommendations. This will require expertise and leadership.

We include specific recommendations for modifying task force recommendations in Appendix V. This is an extensive report with 22 recommendations. Some of these have oversimplified the issues and in general the difficulty of implementation has been underestimated. We also find that frequent references to "KERA practices" and "successful KERA schools" raise many questions and cause confusion. We have explained our concerns in detail in Appendix V and do not repeat them here.

We do however strongly agree with the thrust of the report's recommendations—to require that teachers master challenging

performance standards and to see that higher education institutions emphasize and adequately fund teacher preparation.

The core approach we recommend, as recommended by the Governor's task force, is to require and evaluate entry level knowledge and skills for licensing. This approach should, by establishing expectations, enrich the preparation of teaching in both content and skills. Teachers need a broad range of skills, and these should all be addressed. These include content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge, including principles and strategies for classroom organization and management; curriculum knowledge, including materials and programs; pedagogical content knowledge, an amalgam of content and pedagogy that is teachers' special form of professional understanding; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts, including the characteristics of classrooms, schools, communities, and cultures; knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. (Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Klein, p. 35)

The purpose of improved licensing standards is to emphasize skills rather than hours in class. Linda Darling-Hammond, writes that

> the important attribute. . .is that they [standards] are performance-based—that is, they describe what teachers should know, and be able to do rather than listing courses that should be taken to achieve a license. This shift toward performance-based standard setting is in line with the approach to licensing taken in other professions and with the changes already occurring in a number of states. The approach should clarify what the criteria are for assessment and licensing . . . ultimately, performance-based licensing standards should enable states to permit greater innovation and diversity in how teacher education programs operate by assessing their outcomes rather than merely regulating their inputs or procedures. (p.45)

One important strength of the approaches suggested by the teacher education task force is to encourage innovation at the campus level to help students reach the established standards, not prescribe a one-size-fits-all for each institution of higher learning. These approaches should include

some of the promising practice, such as Professional Development Schools and the 5-year Bachelors/Masters program at the University of Louisville. The emphasis on skills and standards rather than course taking is also meant to encourage colleges and universities to either make their masters degree programs meaningful or eliminate them.

Shifting the certification requirements to mastery of challenging and appropriate performance standards can also move the state closer to insuring that practitioners have and can use the knowledge and skills they will need.

We are also encouraged by the task force's emphasis on:

- Identifying what teachers and administrators should know and be able to do in light of Kentucky's education goals, and designing preparation programs with these K-12 goals in mind, can add coherence and focus to the preparation programs.
- Focusing on the current teaching practices used by college faculty, comparing them to what is known about "best" teaching and learning strategies, and encouraging movement toward these best practices that can strengthen undergraduate teaching. This could benefit all students, regardless of whether they are in professional training programs.
- Ensuring that colleges and universities make the necessary financial commitments to teacher education programs that they want to maintain. Teacher education nationwide is often underfunded even when the programs bring substantial revenue to the training institution. Requiring the college or university to provide adequate resources and then justify the hard choices that will accompany such allocation decisions will likely increase the level of commitment to professional training.

- We recommend that one year from now and each year thereafter progress by the Education Professional Standards Board toward the goals of improved teacher education be evaluated and the public be informed of progress. This reporting should be undertaken by an expert panel appointed by the Governor.

Rationale

If new standards are to be achieved, progress toward them must be monitored. This review should include an evaluation of the Council on Higher Education's capacity to provide direction for teacher education.

- We recommend that the Kentucky General Assembly take steps to ensure that the compensation plan that was mandated in 1990 be produced as soon as possible. This plan should propose ways to connect teacher compensation to demonstrated professional skills.

Rationale

The basic premise inherent in Kentucky education reform is that highly qualified individuals need to be attracted into teaching and that the skills of the teaching workforce need to be greatly enhanced through training and professional development. Both goals are influenced by financial compensation. Thus the legislature requested in 1990 that the Kentucky Department of Education prepare a plan for restructuring teacher compensation. In the absence of this plan, no progress has been made nor legislative action taken.

Analysis and research at the national level offers interesting new approaches to teacher compensation. Among these is the idea of "skills based" compensation. This concept is one the Prichard Committee believed had merit in its 1985 report. Changing the compensation system from one based on seniority to one based on skills deserves serious consideration. (See Kelley and Odden)

- We recommend that the Education Professional Standards Board establish policies and practices that strongly encourage Kentucky teachers to be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards with appropriate incentives, compensation for expenses, goals for number of teachers who should become certified, and timetable for implementation. The Professional Standards Board should also explore the feasibility, cost, and time

needed to require National Board Certification as a prerequisite for Rank I certification.

Rationale

The National Board has established rigorous methods that encourage exemplary teacher preparation. These are a powerful way to encourage pursuit by teachers of professional development. Kentucky teachers should be encouraged to seek and be rewarded for this rigorous certification.

- **We recommend that the Prichard Committee form a joint task force, in cooperation with the Kentucky Education Association and the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, to encourage a concentration on improving teacher preparation.**

Rationale

Teachers and administrators need encouragement from their professional organizations to reach higher standards of achievement. The Kentucky Education Association and the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, as the voices of public school teachers and administrators, are influential in setting priorities at the state level. Leadership from the Kentucky Education Association and Kentucky Association of School Administrators is required if teacher education is to be vastly improved.

- **We recommend that a biennial Award for Excellence in Teacher Preparation be presented by the Prichard Committee to the college or university that displays exemplary achievement in the preparation of teachers or for an exemplary program or innovation.**

Rationale

Those with primary responsibility for the preparation of teachers have few incentives to change. Criteria for this award should be built by a national panel and based on the goals contained in this report. Those criteria should emphasize attention to the quality of teacher preparation across the entire campus not in the college or department of education alone.

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Chapter 5

Professional Development

In 1993 and 1994 the Prichard Committee was a party to an external analysis of professional development conducted by the Partnership for Kentucky School Reform. The analysis and recommendations were provided by G. Williamson McDiarmid, co-director of the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning at Michigan State University. A steering committee of Kentucky educators reviewed findings and made recommendations; this group was composed of representatives of educational organizations, university faculty, and teachers. Our recommendations on professional development incorporate the findings of this report and subsequent plans to implement these findings. Many of these have been incorporated into a project that has been funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

If school reform is to succeed in Kentucky greatly enhanced professional development is required. These recommendations are, we believe, the way to accomplish this.*

Overview

Education reform establishes new expectations for teachers that many have not been prepared to meet.

The Kentucky Education Reform Act has established demanding new expectations for teachers. Teachers need to learn new ways of teaching to help students achieve the high academic expectations of the learner outcomes at the heart of the reform. Underlying these outcomes is a view

This report is based upon the work of G. Williamson McDiarmid in his report,* ***Realizing New Learning for All Students: A Framework for the Professional Development of Kentucky Teachers**. We acknowledge our deep gratitude to Dr. McDiarmid for his work and insights.*

of teaching as helping students comprehend the implications of new ideas and information for their existing understandings. Because academic standards are higher and any group of students today is likely to be highly diverse—cognitively, socially, culturally, ethnically, linguistically—teachers must be very knowledgeable about the subjects they teach.

Without deep and flexible understanding of the content, teachers are handicapped in the critical task of helping diverse students find points of access to the school curriculum.

In addition, reform has created new decision-making roles for teachers outside the classroom.

Pre-reform teacher education programs did not prepare teachers for these new roles and practices. Teachers must continue to teach and, concurrently, learn what they need to know to help all learners achieve Kentucky's ambitious Learning Goals and Academic Expectations.

To learn what they need to know and to change their roles and practices, teachers need time and mental space. Time and mental space—the chance to concentrate their thinking on teaching away from the physical and mental demands of the classroom—are in short supply.

Public perceptions of teachers' work exclude professional development.

Although reform has changed expectations for teachers, how the public and policymakers perceive teachers' work has not changed. They continue to think teachers are working only when they are with their students. As a result, there is little support for providing the time and resources teachers require to change their practice. As other issues occupy the policymakers' agenda, support for teachers' professional development may dwindle, as has happened in other states.

Learning to teach in ways to achieve academic expectations is developmental and requires time.

The changes teachers must make to meet the goals of reform entail much more than learning new techniques. They go to the core of what it means to teach. Because these changes are so momentous, most teachers will require considerable time to achieve them.

Learning about the reform goals is but the first step. Teachers must figure out what the goals imply for what they do and what they know. Teachers must gradually blend their customary ways with new approaches to helping students learn. Understanding complex tasks and ideas requires substantial time: to test out new ideas, to assess their effects, to adjust the approach, to assess again, and so on.

New conditions are necessary if teachers are to learn to teach in new ways.

The increased demands of teaching embedded in reform require changes in how teachers work and learn:

- First and foremost, they need *opportunities to work with colleagues*, both in their school building and beyond it. They need chances to learn from one another's successes and failures, to share ideas and knowledge.
- They need *the support and advice of a principal* who understands the demands reform places on teachers and what it takes to change teachers' roles and practice.
- Many teachers also will need someone, other than the principal, *to observe them trying out new practices and provide non-evaluative comments and suggestions.*
- They need to be part of *a larger learning community* that is a source of support and ideas—a community that consists of administrators, students, parents, school councils, school boards, colleagues in higher education, and business people.
- Beyond such support systems, teachers also need *chances to experience learning in ways consistent with reform* and *to observe teaching practices that help all students achieve the learning goals.*
- Such teaching, in turn, may require them to *develop new understandings of the subjects they teach and the roles they play* in the school, classroom and larger learning community.
- To make progress in the developmental process of learning new practices, *teachers need to feel that they can critically assess their own practice.*

- And, perhaps most vitally, *teachers need time and mental space.* These enable them to become involved in the sometimes protracted process of changing roles and practice.
- To achieve time and mental space, *professional development must be re-defined as a central part of teaching.* It can no longer be add-on activities tacked onto the school day, week or year. It must be woven into teachers' daily work.
- For this to happen, *support for professional development must be sustained and long term.*

What's to be Done

Unlike many education reforms, the Kentucky Education Reform Act acknowledges the importance of professional development and allocates to schools both a substantial amount of money and considerable decision making power over professional development. In fact, in 1995-96 school-based decision making (SBDM) councils will have control over 65 percent of state aid for the staff development budget which is funded at the rate of $23 per student. This structure follows the logic of SBDM—that those closest to the students are in the best position to make decisions that most directly affect the educational program.

Professional development committees—which often include parents—are responsible for determining the needs of their faculty and planning opportunities to address these needs. In addition, SBDM councils have authority over areas of scheduling and teacher assignment, offering the potential to reallocate time in different ways. The legislation also allows districts to increase four mandated professional development days by as many as five additional days if they so choose.

Teachers' opportunities to learn new roles and classroom practices are arguably the linchpin of reform in Kentucky. The ambitious goals for all learners can only be achieved if teachers create opportunities for students to develop their critical capacities and their understandings of fundamental information, ideas, and processes in the gamut of school subjects. Most Kentucky teachers, however, prepared to teach before these new goals were established. Consequently, most are unprepared to help all students achieve them.

Current thinking about professional development policy and practice underscores the importance of ongoing opportunities for teachers to develop deeper knowledge of their subject areas, teaching and learning,

and their students. Moreover, it is argued that professional development must reflect the same principles of learning that reform demands for students—engaging, authentic, and collaborative activities that foster inquiry and debate. The implication is a view of professional development radically different from most current practice, including a continuum from teacher preparation through all career stages, collaborative and inquiry-based learning opportunities inside and outside of the workplace, and a school culture and structure that provide time and support for ongoing professional learning.

Across Kentucky, pieces of this new conception of teacher learning are occurring. A variety of formal and informal networks offers opportunities for sustained professional learning and debate, including the KERA Fellows, who meet regularly in some districts; PRISM, which pulls together middle school math and science teachers, and the National Alliance for Restructuring Education schools which sponsor a variety of statewide as well as national events for school staff. However, we know little about how teachers actually use these networks, what they learn and bring back to their schools, whether their colleagues are receptive, and how much the networks are valued locally and across the state.

Several influences likely are limiting how teachers view and make choices about professional development: teacher beliefs and past experiences, state reporting procedures, constraints on time, and access to new viewpoints (the supply side of the equation). For example, recent work by Helen Featherstone and her colleagues found that teachers intent on changing their teaching of mathematics along the lines suggested by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards initially thought they needed to learn new pedagogical skills. After examining examples of reformed practice and their own practice, they realized the primary impediment to teaching in more ambitious ways was not a lack of knowledge of practical skills but of genuine understandings of the mathematics they had been teaching. Similarly, one contribution of the teacher center movement of the 1970s was to demonstrate the importance of providing opportunities for teachers to identify their real needs through extensive discussions and occasions to reflect on their practice in the company of other practitioners.

In short, a comprehensive approach is required. If teachers are to change their beliefs, knowledge, and practices about teaching and of adult learning, all available pressures must push in this direction. These include state policies that communicate images of professional development, that

reward certain kinds of opportunities to learn, and that define criteria for licensure and recertification, as well as state and local policies that determine the flexibility and support schools and school councils receive to invent and participate in new forms of teacher learning.

In the years since 1990, professional development has begun to move in some of these directions. Our recommendations are meant to encourage and support more progress toward this comprehensive approach.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education and the General Assembly adopt professional development of teachers as one of their most important priorities. This priority should be reflected in all decisions, including the organization of and decisions by the Department of Education and allocation of financial resources and time.

Rationale

For the reasons we have expressed, we believe that improving the capacity of teachers to teach all children well is the core challenge for achieving high quality, equitable education in Kentucky. Without this improved capacity, the extraordinary learning goals set for Kentucky children and schools will not be achieved.

- We recommend that additional time for the professional development of teachers be found by a combination of approaches—funding additional work days by the General Assembly and reorganizing the way time is used at the school level by creative planning.

Rationale

There is universal agreement that teachers need time to learn, plan, and interact when they are not teaching children. This resource must be provided. The General Assembly should add a substantial number of days

to the teacher work year beginning in the next biennium. In addition, the days already available can be used much more effectively by local schools. For example, typical in-service presentations afford teachers few opportunities to try out new ideas and approaches, to assess the effects of these on their students, and then to revisit the ideas again. Neither do they afford teachers the chance to examine central ideas/information in the subjects they teach.

- We recommend the creation of teacher networks to provide teachers with opportunities to learn and to exchange ideas about how best to respond to the new learner goals and the new demands on their time.

Rationale

Teachers' networks provide opportunities to discuss with colleagues the meaning of reform for their roles and practice and the need to build both a broader supportive community (extending beyond individual schools) among teachers and the capacity for professional development tailored to the needs of teachers and specific to Kentucky education.

Throughout the country, teachers have created networks of colleagues. The best known of these is the Writing Project started in the San Francisco Bay area in the 1980s which has spread throughout the country. The Urban Mathematics Collaboratives, another example, were established in 11 cities in the mid 80s. In Kentucky, the Kentucky Education Association, with funding from the Partnership for Kentucky School Reform, organized Teachers to the Power of Two (the T2 Project). This program makes teachers who identified themselves as experts in particular areas available as consultants to their colleagues. Other inspiring examples of such networks include the Kentucky Writing Project, Foxfire, the Kentucky Economics Education Initiative, and the PRISM Project.

Expanding teacher networks in a number of areas can be valuable to teachers. For instance, a network focused on the new assessments would prove helpful to a large number of teachers trying to understand the implications of these for their practice. Teachers in a given area could be invited to discuss the new assessments and their experiences with them.

Teachers could then discuss the best ways to share their concerns, questions, and promising practices as well as identify others—for instance, university faculty—who could be helpful.

Other networks might be subject-matter specific. The Urban Mathematics Collaboratives in Memphis, San Francisco, St. Louis, and other cities have created a variety of opportunities for teachers to learn more about mathematics and teaching mathematics: industrial internships, exchange programs with colleges and industries, evening symposia, summer workshops, and so on.

To succeed, supporters must establish the legitimacy of involvement in these networks as a professional development activity on a par with workshops offered by various vendors. The support and involvement of industry and business are critical. In addition, building administrators, school councils, professional development committees, consortia, and the Kentucky Department of Education must be convinced of the legitimacy of such involvement.

- We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education in cooperation with the Kentucky Education Association develop, in several schools, model professional development plans to be used by professional development committees.

Rationale

Teachers are being asked to design their own staff development, but they are frequently unsure about new roles and practices. As Jane David wrote in her 1993 report to the Prichard Committee, "They don't know what to do." In addition, the conventional view is that professional development consists only of workshops or mini courses because school professional development committees frequently choose from a menu of such courses proposed by vendors rather than create their own plan.

The Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Education Association should collaborate with faculty in colleges and universities and the professional development committees in a small number of schools (with school councils) to design professional development plans. Department staff should meet with teachers from these schools to solicit their ideas about a plan before undertaking the design effort.

The goal will be to document the process of identifying teacher needs and designing a plan to meet these needs. In so doing, the planning group would identify the learning needs of teachers unlikely to be met by the vendors. One purpose would be to identify the questions teachers need to ask themselves in designing their professional development. A second purpose would be to demonstrate various ways that existing opportunities can be organized to meet teacher needs. This exercise also will help identify what other opportunities to learn should be included in these plans if they are to help teachers change their practice and roles.

For instance, teachers, following a workshop, may need to find opportunities to meet to discuss how the ideas they encountered apply to their classrooms. Or they may want to invite a teacher from another school with expertise in a particular area to help them think about the implications of a vendor's presentation for their practice. Or they may need to schedule visits to one another's classrooms to observe their efforts to change their practice.

The need for such opportunities may, in turn, have implications for restructuring: How do the principal and school council need to rethink and reconfigure the schedule to create the kinds of learning opportunities teachers need?

In developing these plans, the Department should draw on what researchers have been discovering about teacher learning—particularly teacher learning from, for, and about reform—including the need for learning opportunities:

- that are connected and sustained over time;
- that encourage teachers to examine and rethink their initial ideas, knowledge and practice;
- that address both teacher understanding of the subjects they teach as well as their knowledge of helping diverse students learn the subject;
- that include opportunities for teachers individually and in the company of colleagues to reflect on their practice and their efforts to change their practice;
- in which teachers work with colleagues in developing new knowledge and learning new practice;
- in the context in which teachers will use their new knowledge, and
- in the context of particular subject matters.

▪ We recommend a consortium of colleges and universities establish a statewide principals' center where principals learn about the new kinds of teaching and learning that underlie high quality education and about how to lead and support teachers in changing their practices and role. The principals' center should encourage the creation of regional and local networks, special institutes, academic seminars, discussion groups, and other learning opportunities based on the expressed needs of principals.

Rationale

There is a need for principals to understand and support the goal of all students achieving high academic standards and how to accomplish that goal. These principals must provide leadership in mastering the resources—time, opportunity, and funding—necessary to support changes in teachers' practices.

Principals would attend the center for several weeks during the summer and return periodically during the school year. These visits would afford principals the opportunity to:

- experience—as learners and as teachers—reformed ways of teaching and learning.
- learn more about teacher development, especially the types of experiences likely to lead to the changes in practice implicit in the Kentucky Education Reform Act and the role colleagues, administrators, council, boards, parents, business, universities, and the community can play in such development.
- learn more about how to work with school councils and professional development committees to devise professional development plans that fit their particular needs.
- learn more about the ways in which principals in Kentucky and nationally are responding to the reform movement and the ways—including restructuring the school day and week, drawing on resources in the community, creating opportunities for collaborative work among teachers—principals have devised for supporting teachers in changing their practice and recasting their roles.

- learn more about working with teachers who are at different levels of understanding the reform to devise professional development activities that fit their particular needs.

An additional benefit of participation at the center would be for principals to create their own networks. Just as teacher networks enable teachers to pool what they have learned and inform one another of promising practices, principals' networks could serve the same function.

- We recommend the creation, expansion, or strengthening of subject matter councils of teachers to provide collegial leadership and guidance for teachers around subject content. These councils should be organized in collaboration with institutions of higher learning and should link college and school faculties.

Rationale

Teachers need opportunities to develop understanding of their subject matter at a level rarely experienced before. They can do this through interaction with colleagues in subject matter councils in a variety of ways.

Rather than duplicate the efforts of the various subject matter associations, these councils—one for each subject matter addressed in the curricular frameworks—would build on the current efforts of these associations. Ideally, the subject matter councils would include representatives with strong subject matter interest from both public and private elementary and secondary schools; the appropriate subject matter associations; the universities, including arts and science as well as teacher education faculty; the Kentucky Department of Education; business, industry and the public who may have expertise in particular areas.

The charge to each of these groups would be to:

- Examine the new curriculum frameworks to determine the knowledge, skills and learning opportunities both elementary and secondary teachers need to reach the goals in their subject matters set by the reforms. The frameworks tell us what *all* students need to know and understand; they don't tell us what teachers need to know and be able to do to help *all* students learn.

Identifying these understandings and skills, and making this available to schools, teachers, parents, policymakers and the public, will be the first task of the councils.

- Identify the long-term professional development needs in their subject matter based on an examination of currently available opportunities.
- Identify existing providers of staff development who can help teachers learn what the council believes they need to know.
- Identify ways in which teachers can be helped to see the connections among the subject matters and how they can help their students see these connections.
- Identify ways that elementary teachers can deepen their subject matter understanding given that they are responsible for all the subject matters.
- Plan and develop with existing organizations opportunities that target teachers and regional resource curriculum and instruction personnel. Such opportunities would help develop the understanding and knowledge of the subject matters, of teaching the subject matter to diverse learners, and of connections among the subject matters called for in the reform.
- Make long-term recommendations to universities on what they need to offer prospective teachers so they can develop the subject matter understandings and knowledge of the connections among subject matters that are necessary if new teachers are to help all students learn as the reform requires.
- Serve as consultants to the Kentucky Education Association, regional resource centers, districts, individual schools, school councils, and teachers, and others who seek support and advice in organizing teacher development opportunities.
- Identify classrooms in which the kind of learning and teaching called for in the reform is taking place. These classrooms could be videotaped for use on KET and for distribution to teachers, school councils, parents, businesses, and others. Special efforts should be made to identify classrooms in which poor children, those of color, and those with special needs are engaged in more challenging learning.

- We recommend the creation of a Professional Development Roundtable consisting of high-level policymakers, representatives

from organizations that provide or broker professional development (consortia, Standards Advisory Council for Professional Development, KDE and its Regional Service Centers, universities, district offices, subject matter associations, Kentucky Education Association, private vendors), practitioners, and representatives of the research community. The Roundtable's purpose would be to translate research evidence into policy recommendations and then inform the broader policy community and the public.

Rationale

Resources across numerous sectors and jurisdictions must be combined and coordinated if professional development is to improve. The creation of such a Roundtable has been included in the Prichard Committee/Partnership proposal to the Pew Charitable Trusts.

The Roundtable should also evaluate teacher and administrator training. At this point, there is no research evaluating what participants actually learn, what changes take place as a result of training, and the overall impact of professional development.

[redacted] - We recommend that a careful review of the effectiveness of the Regional Service Centers be undertaken by the Kentucky Institute for Education Research.

Rationale

We have heard contradictory and anecdotal reports about the Regional Service Centers. Research is needed to determine how effectively they are carrying out their mandates. Special attention should be given to the Regional Service Centers' success at instilling professional development as a school district priority, the effectiveness of training provided or brokered, and success in encouraging connections among schools, universities, and colleges.

References

McDiarmid, G. Williamson. *Realizing New Learning for All Students: A Framework for the Professional Development of Kentucky Teachers*. The Partnership for Kentucky School Reform. Lexington, KY. May, 1994.

Section II

Report from the Prichard Committee Task Force on Restructuring Time and Learning

Chapter 6

A Matter of Time: Creating High Performance Schools

> We couldn't argue against the increased academic achievement that resulted with the alternative 45/15 extended year calendar. But we had to find ways to balance that with the concerns of family schedules and family obligations. A significant majority of our parents were willing to work with us because they understood the academic benefits of restructuring time in our schools.
>
> Tony Sholar, Parent Member,
> School-Based Decision Making Council
> Frankfort Independent Schools

Today schools are expected to join with America's best-run public and private organizations in their efforts to be "high performance organizations."

This requires an ongoing commitment throughout the organization to continuously improve student achievement. High performance schools also require involvement by all *stakeholders*, such as parents, teachers, students, administrators, and the community.

Other key ingredients for high performance schools are team work, an emphasis on professional development, and true authority and responsibility granted to those on the front line. High performance schools also require a willingness to confront a paradigm like the traditional school calendar.

No one can tell a school how to become a true high performance organization. The impetus has to come from within. We salute all those schools in Kentucky that have started down this road, and we encourage all the others to begin the journey as well.

The agrarian society of America 100 years ago dictated that children be free during the summer months to stay home and help with the crops. This is not the case today for the vast majority of school-aged children. Despite the fact that America has experienced tremendous societal and

economical changes, the educational system continues to work within the old school calendar. The nine months on, three months off, school calendar is no longer beneficial to many students and their families. As Charles Ballinger states, "What is the justification for continuing a 19th century agricultural-based calendar in an urban nation nearing the 21st century?" (Ballinger, 1987)

The long summer break creates problems that must be addressed if we are to increase the academic results for all students in Kentucky. Many professionals believe that long summer vacations are too disruptive to the learning process. Over the summer students tend to forget what they have learned and spend two to six weeks reviewing material at the beginning of each new school year. Expensive buildings that house computer labs and libraries are closed to students and the community during the summer months. Remediation needed by some students is offered during the summer, not during the school year when it could be most helpful. Time and space limit enrichment possibilities for students. Teachers do not have adequate planning and professional development time during the school year.

These factors led the Prichard Committee to appoint the Task Force on Restructuring Time and Learning in the summer of 1994. This task force, comprised of Prichard Committee members, was charged with exploring the use of time in public schools. In keeping with the Prichard Committee's original focus—improvement of education for all Kentucky children—it was clear that time was a critical issue for the committee to study.

The goal was to develop a set of recommendations based on a thorough investigation of how time could be restructured to increase student learning, better accommodate modern-day families, and support the work expected of teachers. We wanted to determine what changes were needed to ensure that the academic performance of all Kentucky children is improved.

This is not the first time we have asked educators and legislators to address the issue of how to use time. In the 1980s the Prichard Committee recommended that the teacher's work year be extended by 10 days, largely for redesigned and improved professional development. We suggested that time be added to the school year when the Kentucky Education Reform Act was being debated in 1990.

In passing the reform act, however, the legislature did not add days to the school year. Such additional days are expensive: each week of school in Kentucky costs taxpayers approximately $50 million.

With this background, we began our study. Specifically we wanted our work to:

- Improve the quality of education in Kentucky.
- Look at how additional time improves educational opportunities.
- Encourage creativity in improving education.
- Assist schools in deciding for themselves how to use time more efficiently.
- Make the community aware of the value of improved education through the effective use of the resource of time.
- Identify options for local decisions.
- Show that time is a means, not an end.
- Provide a catalyst for change.

Task Force Operating Assumptions

We based our recommendations on the following assumptions:

1. Students learn at different rates and in different ways with different subjects.
2. Most schools are currently structured around time, not learning.
3. Incorporation of non-academic subjects into the academic day leaves less time for core academic courses.
4. Other countries significantly outpace our own in the number of hours spent in schools. This results in their higher scholastic achievement.
5. The traditional American school calendar was established 100 years ago to accommodate a rural society where children were needed to help farm during the summer months.
6. Learning loss over the traditional 3-month summer vacation is significant.
7. Closing schools for three months and then reopening them is more costly than keeping the schools open.
8. A school that is open year round can become a true community center, the hub of community activities for people of all ages.
9. Time has been the missing link in reform efforts. Serious consideration of the way time is used for learning is required if

schools are to meet the education reform goal of increased learning for all students.

10. More time must be found and allocated to teachers for planning and professional development.

The Problem

> Learning is the product, and time is an element in the product. We are locked into a traditional way of thinking about time a way of thinking that is part of a past era. We are overlooking some aspects of our lifestyles that are adversely affecting education. We must start to change this situation even though we don't have all the answers.
>
> John Hodge Jones, Chairman,
> National Education Commission
> on Time and Learning, addressing the
> Prichard Committee's Task Force on
> Restructuring Time and Learning

Why is time a concern? The best statement about the issue comes from *Prisoners of Time*, the report of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning. The report shows conclusively that American schools are controlled more by the clock than by academic standards. Time becomes more central than learning when schools are locked into only one way of using time. If learning is to be the priority, as it is in Kentucky, then schools must be organized around learning, not time.

As examples of the prison that time creates, the national commission reports:

- With few exceptions, schools open and close at fixed times.
- Schools typically offer a 6-period day with about 5.6 hours in the classroom.
- Schedules assign a national average of 51 minutes per class period, no matter how well or poorly students comprehend the material.
- Secondary school graduation requirements are universally based on Carnegie units, or "seat time."

- Despite the obsession with time, little attention is paid to how it is used: in 42 states studied by the commission, only 41 percent of secondary school time was spent on core academic subjects.
- Students in America receive less than half the daily instruction in core academic subjects that French, German, and Japanese students receive.

These conditions stem from five premises that educators know are false, reports the national commission:

First is the assumption that all students arrive at school ready to learn, in the same way, on the same schedule, all in rhythm with each other.

The **second** is the notion that academic time can be used for non-academic purposes with no effect on learning.

Third is the pretense that because yesterday's calendar was good enough for us it should be good enough for our children, despite major changes in society at large.

Fourth is the myth that schools can be transformed without giving teachers the time they need to retool and reorganize their work.

And **fifth** is a new fiction: that it is reasonable to expect "world-class academic performance" from our students within the time-bound system that is already failing them.

Time and Learning in Kentucky

The issue of time is important and auspicious in Kentucky as the state attempts to achieve the goal of high levels of learning for all children. Absolute standards of academic achievement have been established. Learning is now most important, not how long it takes to achieve that learning.

In the past serving time was the goal. Kentucky's new, higher academic goals suggest that different children need different amounts of time for learning. Some children advance more quickly than others and need more challenges; some need more time to cover basic material. Absolute academic standards also suggest that students need more time engaged in serious academic work, particularly in core or basic subjects.

Indeed, the matter of time is a constant thread that runs throughout Kentucky's education reform. But time is also hidden, not as visible as

other education issues. Our goal is to make time more visible, to stress it, and to suggest new ways of thinking about it.

From the perspectives of teachers, the state's new education program is extremely demanding. Teachers are expected to work harder, especially as reform is being implemented. More time is required for teachers to learn and practice new teaching approaches, make decisions on school councils, plan new classroom activities, analyze test data, talk with parents, and participate in professional development. Such change is extremely demanding. It requires time to reflect, talk, and think about new ideas.

Meanwhile, the attitude prevails that teachers are working only when they are in the classroom with students. Kentucky's school law gives schools the option of using up to five instructional days for staff development. This option has forced educators to choose between instruction for children or professional development for themselves—a divisive decision at best.

In other countries, a teacher normally spends from 15 to 25 hours each week out of class, planning and conferring with other teachers about how to improve students' academic performance, and working with students individually.

Kentucky's reform law affects time in other ways. Decisions about time and scheduling are now shifted to the local level; the only state requirements are 175 attendance days and the equivalent of six hours in school per day. State requirements for specific number of minutes for each subject ("seat time") have been replaced with academic expectations, because the seat time requirements did not work.

Time is a critical resource, and control over it is essential for those at the local level trying to bring about change. The importance of local control over decisions about time is central to our thinking.

But time isn't a resource controlled only by schools. Parents and communities control it, too. American students spend much more time watching television than studying. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that 70 percent of 13-year-olds spend two or more hours watching TV per day while only 10 percent of 13-year-olds spend the same amount of time doing homework. (Time Commission, 1994) Neither teachers nor education policy can change this, but parents can.

Likewise, many older students work while they attend school. Ensuring that employment doesn't interfere with school work and that

there is a proper balance between the two are a family and community responsibility.

Since most decisions about time are now local, there is a definite need for teachers, students, parents, and community members to engage in both discussion and action which will lead to enhanced learning time for students. We emphasize the importance of local decisions and local initiatives throughout our recommendations.

There has been early speculation that this task force would recommend increasing the length of the school year. This was not our intention when we began to work and is not the case now.

In the 1980s, the parents and citizens of the Prichard Committee recommended lengthening the employment year for teachers. We had hoped those additional days would be funded (costing as much as $100 million) in 1990, but they were not. It is also true that across America there is an awareness that the length of our school year, among the shortest of industrialized nations, is too short. In Korea, students spend 222 days in school; in Japan, 220 days, and in Canada, 188 days.

We have examined the question of the length of the school year, but we do not recommend lengthening it through legislative action, paid for with general fund dollars. We conclude there are many other creative, local ways to deal with the need for time, some already being implemented in Kentucky schools. Providing additional work days for teachers or school days for children through state legislation would require new state dollars and put more stress on teachers already immersed in the hard work of change. It is not feasible at this time.

Progress on Time in Kentucky

> The school schedule should reflect what your community wants. If it doesn't, then you've merely rearranged your calendar.
>
> Frances Marlette, Principal
> Wilkinson Street School
> Frankfort, Kentucky

It is imperative that students, teachers, and parents share the vision and commitment to restructuring time as a means of improving student achievement.

Linda France, Assistant Superintendent
Jessamine County Schools

Although proposals to lengthen the school year to 190 days, and to require some teachers to work year round, failed in the 1990 General Assembly, other aspects of education reform do address the time issue.

First, the core idea, contained in the Kentucky Education Reform Act, is to reorganize schools around learning, not time. In addition, other aspects of Kentucky's education system address time directly. These include:

- **Pre-School Program**. Provides more learning time to put at-risk 3 and 4-year-olds on an "even playing field" when they begin school.
- **Primary Program**. Allows students to progress at their own pace.
- **Extended School Services**. Provides more time for students who are having academic difficulties. Teachers can design ways to help individual children after school, summer school options, Saturday classes, etc.
- **Family Resource and Youth Services Centers**. Helps students stay in school full time by supporting families and children through referrals to social services and collaboration with community organizations.
- **School-Based Decision Making**. The council controls the assignment of all instructional and non-instructional staff time. The council can also determine the configuration of the school day and week subject to the beginning and ending times of the school day and school calendar year as established by the local school board.
- **SEEK**. Per pupil, rather than categorical, funding makes local decision making regarding reshaping time easier.
- **Technology**. Allows for flexibility and offers more up-to-the-minute instructional materials. Students are less text-bound.
- **Deregulation**. H.B. 940 removed time on task regulations. All time regulations have been removed except the 175-day school

year and the 6-hour instructional time. (In 1994 this was changed to mean the equivalent of 6-hour days.) During the 1994 legislative session, the Kentucky General Assembly amended the law to say, in effect, that schools or school districts are not required to request state approval for varying schedules or time structures.

- **Curriculum.** Researchers consistently report that classroom teachers are spending more time teaching reading and writing at the primary levels.

Recommendations

> Ft. Knox parents, teachers, and students have experienced the positive effects of moving to a year round calendar. Parents are able to take advantage of off-season rates and take their children on creative vacations. Teachers have had more time for planning and professional development, and students have had increased motivation as a result of intersession activities.
>
> Dick Thornton, Director of Public Relations
> Fort Knox Dependent Schools

Study of current problems stemming from the use of time and an analysis of progress being made statewide in restructuring time supported the task force's rationale for each recommendation.

[redacted] - We recommend that all Kentucky schools and school districts consider alternatives to the traditional school day and school year. However, we recommend against any new *statewide* mandates, believing that local initiative will be more effective. Indeed, creative ways of using time more efficiently and effectively are already being implemented in many Kentucky schools. These innovative efforts, especially the process used to implement change fully and successfully, can serve as examples to other schools and districts seeking to improve student achievement. We stress that no one model can be used statewide. Each school district or local school should initiate its own process, based on its own particular goals.

Rationale

Many of the task force members say they began the study of time believing that extending the school year statewide was the answer to improving our schools. Following testimony from educators, considerable thought, and personal experience, members now believe that many of the local initiatives they examined are superior.

We believe that the decisions about how to reach high levels of academic achievement for all students in a school must be based on local deliberation. Fortunately, it is clear that many local educators are addressing this issue. These decisions will be different for each school and community; determining local needs must be the starting point.

Englehard Elementary in Jefferson County followed this process. They assessed their needs based on the past year's achievement data and determined they wanted students to do better academically. A key part of their decision to change how they used time focused on supporting teachers in a way that made professional development a top priority for the school's improvement plan. (The processes followed by Englehard and several other schools are outlined in Appendix VI.)

➤ We recommend that these local efforts to improve the use of time involve the entire community. A local task force should include all stakeholders, such as teachers, school council members, principals, administrators, school board members, parents, government officials, business and church leaders, and any others who might be affected by changes in the school day or school year. The task force should also consider how families and communities can contribute to make more time available for learning.

Rationale

Time is a critical resource for student learning. Usually educational time is considered only as a school matter (i.e., the length of the school day). However, we believe it is extremely important to realize that time is a family and community resource as well. Students, for instance, who spend six hours watching television each day (the national average) and

no time doing homework, should be a concern for families and communities, not schools alone. Other examples related to part-time work, homework, and non-academic activities such as athletics abound.

Individual parents, isolated from others or subject to peer pressure, are at a disadvantage. Therefore, coalitions of parents and others in the community need to band together, using their own creativity and good judgment to see that adequate time is spent on educational work by the children and youth in the community. Several existing organizations—civic groups, churches, social service agencies, or Prichard Committee Community Committees for Education—are in place and can help provide leadership for such coalitions.

Changing how people use time is a personal issue. It means a different thing to each person experiencing the change. Unless such time decisions involve and ask for the opinions of all those affected by the change, even the best decisions will not be supported.

Our discussions and interviews reinforced the need for inclusiveness. Even those who strongly oppose the changes should be encouraged to voice their opinions early in the process. School districts neglecting to include parents or others in the discussions found they lost time and momentum when they had to drop back and regroup.

[redacted] - We recommend that local schools and districts evaluate how much time is now devoted to the core academic areas (English, math, science, civics, history, geography, the arts, and foreign language), and consider how restructuring the school day and/or the school calendar might provide more time for them.

Rationale

The National Commission on Time recommended that schools spend 5.5 hours per day on core academic subjects. Members of the commission listened to teachers and principals who believe that 5.5 hours must be the minimum if students are expected to learn at the desired levels. They also made international comparisons indicating that students in other countries spend significantly more time studying core academics.

Current national research reveals that only 41 percent of students' time over four years of high school is spent studying core subjects. By the time American students graduate from high school, they have, on average,

studied core subjects for 1,460 hours out of the 3,560 hours they have spent in school. These figures mean that in America much more time is spent on electives than on core academic subjects. We have no reason to believe that Kentucky is any different in its practices. Even though other factors such as quality of instruction and student motivation are critical, the time needed to master academic studies is vital, and must be found.

Kentucky citizens support this emphasis on academic studies. A 1995 opinion survey compiled by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center indicates that 75 percent of Kentuckians believe more attention should be focused on core academics.

- We recommend that schools assign challenging homework. Time spent in school is not the only way to learn. We recommend the following guidelines for hours of homework per week as outlined by the Kentucky Department of Education:

Primary students	**1 to 3 hours**
Intermediate grade students	**4 to 6 hours**
Middle school students	**7 to 8 hours**
High school students	**10 to 15 hours**

Rationale

Effective assignment of homework can provide the following benefits: additional practice; increased amount of time students are actively engaged in learning; extended learning time and faster movement in learning; increased student responsibility and accountability, and increased communication to parents about student progress and the kinds of work being done in school. In addition, homework is also a useful tool for teachers to monitor progress and diagnose learning problems.

Parents must be urged to be involved actively in the school work of their children. Homework assignments offer an opportunity for valuable interaction between parents and children in support of learning.

Quality homework assignments do not have to require paper and pencil. Examples of what young children can do at home include watching a newscast and discussing the main points with their parents, or taking a walk and describing to an adult what they have seen. (For more information on homework, see Appendix VII.)

As we considered time as a family and community resource, we

discussed the amount of time students typically spend watching television, working, and participating in other non-academic activities. Collectively these uses of time can detract from serious work on academics.

[redacted] - We recommend that local school districts consider keeping schools open beyond instructional hours for enrichment and tutoring opportunities, extracurricular activities, more flexible work schedules for teachers, and child care. This is sometimes called "extended day" and should not be confused with "extended school services," a program that provides additional instructional time for students who need extra help in academic subjects.

Rationale

Interviews with leaders of schools and school districts who have restructured time say that they have used extended school services funds to provide time for an array of services for students and families. These services enhance school achievement and provide support to parents. In addition, many other options exist for how time can be extended both before and after the traditional school day. Partnerships between schools and local community groups can provide necessary resources beyond funding provided by school reform dollars.

[redacted] - We recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education identify any existing barriers in local and state regulations or statutes, intentional or unintentional, that restrict local flexibility and remove such barriers.

[redacted] - We recommend that schools and school districts consider how teachers can be given more time for planning and professional development. The issue of time applies to them, too. We also recommend time for professional development be woven throughout the school year and school day.

Rationale

Some school leaders have reported that state regulations and statues pose serious barriers to restructuring time. Other leaders have said this is not the case. The Kentucky Department of Education should thoroughly investigate and identify barriers if they exist. Those making the decisions at local levels need a clear understanding of what they can or cannot change.

Current research reminds us that the work life of American teachers is very different from teachers in other countries. Our teachers spend their days in classrooms teaching with little time to learn from and confer with their colleagues. They work in isolation and do their planning, grading, and thinking alone.

Our teachers are teaching longer and working harder than anywhere else. Decision makers may need to take advice from a top IBM executive who said, "If 20 percent of the computers in my computer plant were dropping off the assembly line before they reached the end, and the other 80 percent reached the end but had defects, the last thing I'd advocate is running the line an extra few hours a day or an extra few weeks a year." Thus, the issue is not necessarily more time, but rather, its structure.

In 1994, G. Williamson McDiarmid, a Michigan State University researcher, wrote *Realizing New Learning for All Students: A Framework for the Professional Development of Kentucky Teachers* for the Partnership for Kentucky School Reform. In that research McDiarmid reminds us that "the changes teachers must make to meet the goals of reform entail much more than learning new techniques. They go to the core of what it means to teach. Because these changes are so momentous, most teachers will require considerable time to achieve them."

➤ We recommend that Kentucky's colleges of education change their curriculum and offer alternatives to their own traditional class schedules to encourage and better accommodate teachers and administrators from schools that adopt non-traditional schedules.

Rationale

Determining how to serve the needs of students preparing to teach, as well as those who need to return to higher education for training and

professional development, must continue to be a major agenda item for universities and colleges. This will require a rethinking of time as it relates to course length, schedule of course offerings, and the role of higher education faculty in providing resources and successful models for how schools, districts, and communities can restructure time.

Therefore, the issue of time is as important for higher education as it is for public school if higher education is to be a contributing partner in the total education of students.

[redacted] - We recommend that the Prichard Committee serve as an information and policy resource, encouraging and supporting community initiatives to use time in more effective and efficient ways. Furthermore, we recommend that the Kentucky Department of Education and key professional groups, especially the Kentucky School Boards Association, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, and the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, provide new training and encouragement to teachers, school councils, administrators, and board members in the area of restructuring time.

Rationale

From our research and conversations with many individuals, we have found that knowledge, information, and support are invaluable to local educators as they redesign local policies on time. Until professional organizations or the Kentucky Department of Education are able to provide such services, the Prichard Committee will do so.

[redacted] - We recommend that the Prichard Committee in two years review what has happened and what effect restructuring time has had on the quality of education.

Rationale

Restructuring time will not happen quickly. Schools throughout the state will study and implement new practices over the next several years. Collecting data on how the changes took place and the process used will be useful.

Questions for Further Research

Restructuring how time is used to advance academic achievement is not a simple task. If strategies for thinking differently about time are to work, discussions must continue over a long period of time. The following list of questions reflects only a few of the issues that need to be addressed if Kentucky educators are to have all information necessary for making decisions about time. Our list is not inclusive, but merely a start in thinking about future research and actions.

- How is time actually being spent in primary, middle, and high schools? What variations are there and what effects do they have on student performance?
- How do curricula and schedules of high quality private schools differ from public schools?
- What state mandates stand in the way or provide no incentives to focus on academic learning?
- What are the effects of school size on academic performance, retention, morale, student behavior, parental involvement, and effective use of time?
- How can technology best be used to support teaching and learning? How is it being used?
- What effect do extended school hours have on delinquency and safety within the school?
- What kinds of homework contribute most to student learning? Are there activities students can do outside of school more productively?
- Today's parents have less time to spend with their children. How can the time they do spend with their children be most productive?
- How much time do teachers need to translate high academic standards into effective classroom practice?
- How much time do teachers spend on non-instructional tasks? What options are there for paraprofessionals?
- To what extent are teachers asked to cover more material than is

possible in the time available? How do teachers decide what to leave in and what to leave out? What effects do those decisions have on student motivation and performance?

- How can time teachers spend on ineffective practices be decreased?

Glossary

Academic Day
That part of the day reserved for study in the core curriculum academic subjects: mathematics, science, English and language arts, history, civics, geography, the arts, and foreign languages.

Block Scheduling
Rearranging time within the 6-hour instructional day. Reconfiguring the traditional 6 or 7-period day of 50 to 55 minutes per period into four longer academic blocks of time ranging from 75 to 90 minutes. There are many versions of this system.

Carnegie Unit
A 1-year course of study consisting of a minimum of 120 60-minute hours of instruction. Carnegie Units are used in the United States to measure high school achievement for graduation requirements and college entrance.

Extended Day
Keeping school buildings open longer than the instructional day for additional activities that can be curricular or extracurricular in nature. Support for these programs is provided through local funding.

Extended School Services
Programs provide additional instructional time and support through longer days, weeks, or year for students who need extra time for learning. Funds are provided through Kentucky's education reform law specifically for instructional support. This additional instruction takes place at times other than the regular school day. Individual school districts decide how to offer these services.

Extended Year
Adding days to the 175-day school year.

45/15
A restructuring of the school year. Classes are in session nine weeks (45 days) followed by a 3-week (15-day) break or intersession. This schedule allows a 5 to 6-week summer break.

Restructuring Time
Reconfiguring the time students spend learning; altering how a school uses its calendar so time is used more efficiently.

School Day
The total time students are in school including the academic day and the time before or after the academic day.

Year Round School
A reorganization of the school calendar to provide for more continuous learning. This plan takes the traditional school year, breaks up the summer vacation, and divides it into smaller vacation periods. Students are in school for the same number of days, but are in school for fewer consecutive days and with more frequent breaks.

Resources

Districts and schools may contact the National Association for Year-Round Education which publishes documents related to year round school and its implementation. Kentucky school districts that have implemented alternative calendars or are considering restructuring are a good source of information on the local level.

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Appendix I

General Premises Regarding the Use of Mediation in Disputes Involving School-based Decision Making Councils

Introduction

Mediation is a structured process in which a specially trained neutral third party assists the parties to reach a voluntary agreement, rather than to seek a decision by a court or administrative body. The mediator facilitates the discussions, but has no decision-making authority, makes no findings, and does not impose his/her view of what the settlement should be. The mediation process can be particularly helpful when the parties involved will have an on-going relationship with one another after the disputes are resolved. For this reason, mediation is an especially useful process for school-based decision making councils who are experiencing conflicts with school boards. In addition, mediation may be appropriate for a wide variety of disputes involving administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members in educational settings.

Considerations

Accessing Mediation Services: First, school councils or other entities must determine whether mediation would be utilized and define under what circumstances it would be employed. Mediation services are available through a variety of means, depending on the particular community, region, or state. If it is determined that mediation may be of use, decisions must be made regarding how to access the process. Will mediation occur at the request of one party or must both parties agree? Will mediation be utilized for any dispute involving district personnel, students, parents, or community members, or will mediation be limited to specific enumerated instances?

Selecting Mediation Service Providers: After determining that mediation will be utilized, and when, decisions must be made about how the mediators will be identified and chosen, and how the cost of the mediator will be addressed. What level of qualifications and experience will be required of the mediators? In addition, what guidelines for location of sessions, timelines, and confidentiality will be adopted? Mediators are available through established mediation centers, through state education department programs, and through private mediation providers.

Enforcing Mediated Agreements: What will be the effect of agreements reached in mediation? Will there be a written documentation of agreements reached? If so, will this documentation be kept "on file" for participants to access in the event of a breach of the mediated agreement?

Evaluating Use of Mediation: Finally, decisions must be made regarding methods for evaluating the use of mediation over time. What evaluation tools will be utilized to assess the participants' satisfaction with the process? What statistics, if any, will be kept to determine the effectiveness of mediation as compared to other methods of resolving disputes?

This document was prepared for the Prichard Committee's Lawyers for School Reform Study Group on Alternative Dispute Resolution by J. Stephen Kirby, November, 1994.

Appendix II

Prichard Committee
Lawyers for School Reform
Study Group Report
Seven Most Frequently Asked Questions
about
School-Based Decision Making
May 1995

I. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CONSULTATION AS FOUND IN KRS 160.345(2)(h)? IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A PRINCIPAL TO CONSULT WITH A COUNCIL IN HIRING THE SCHOOL'S CERTIFIED AND CLASSIFIED STAFF?

DISCUSSION:

- Some problems have been reported with the interpretation of consultation including principals who informed the council of their hiring decision without any discussion; some selections by the principal that appeared to be based on nepotism or cronyism, and some principals who seem to be unduly influenced by the superintendent.
- Councils do not always know and understand the law.
- Some superintendents have indicated that establishing emergency waiver policies that allow the principal to bypass the council members in emergency situations satisfies the need for consultation. There is no agreement about that.
- Webster's Dictionary defines consult as "to seek advice or information; to exchange views; to confer."
- A suit was filed recently regarding a principal whose only consultation with council members occurred at a ball game.

CONCLUSIONS:

Consultation means:

1. The council must meet as a body in a properly-called meeting to discuss filling a vacant position. Failure to consult with the council as a body violates KRS 160.345, which requires consultation with the council.
2. The principal must seek advice or information, exchange views, and confer with the council before the hiring decision is made.
3. The council can establish a policy regarding its role in hiring decisions, which may range from simply discussing criteria for the position to reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates. As councils adopt these policies, it is important that they spell out clearly the process by which they will be consulted. (The Kentucky Association of School Administrators believes this definition is too broad, and the council's role should be limited to those items in number 2 above.)
4. The principal makes the final selection.

RECOMMENDATION:

Training for principals and school councils should include information and guidance in best practices in consulting with councils.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

What if the principal does not meet with or consult the council?

CONCLUSION:

A council could report a "pattern of practice which is detrimental to the successful implementation..." as per KRS 160.345(9)(a).

What is the role of the council in filling coaching positions?

DISCUSSION:

- Coaching positions are an extra duty assignment of school staff.

- Councils have responsibility for policy in the areas of hiring, assignment of staff time, and extracurricular programs.
- In some cases, paraprofessionals are hired if no certified staff member applies.
- In most of the more popular sports, i.e. basketball and football, the coach must be a certified teacher.
- There are several possible scenarios:
  a. A teacher who also serves as a coach leaves the school, and there is a teaching and coaching vacancy.
  b. A teacher/coach resigns from the coaching position, but remains in the teaching position.
  c. No one in the school wants to serve as coach and a paraprofessional is hired or a certified staff person from another school is to be hired.
- This became a major issue in a few school districts and could be a major issue in any district because of the high profile of athletics.

CONCLUSION:

The role of the council in hiring a coach, no matter what the vacancy scenario, is to provide consultation to the principal as in any other hiring situation. (The Kentucky School Boards Association believes that this extra duty assignment is not considered a vacancy and that the council has no role in the selection of a coach when that position is filled from within the district. If an individual is employed from outside the district to, in part, handle coaching duties, then the council would be consulted.)

II. A. AS COUNCILS SELECT A PRINCIPAL, CAN SUPERINTENDENTS WITHHOLD NAMES OF PERSONS THEY DO NOT RECOMMEND (KRS 160.345(5))?

DISCUSSION:

- The limits on refusal to recommend are being litigated in Valeria Reynolds v. Erlanger-Elsmere Board of

Education but might not be reached if Ms. Reynolds prevails on other grounds. In this case, principal Valeria Reynolds' contract was not renewed. The school council, unhappy with the decision to remove Ms. Reynolds, failed to select a new principal from the applicants submitted by the superintendent. They sought "all" applicants, knowing that Ms. Reynolds had applied. The board took the council to court, and an interim principal was named. Ms. Reynolds continues to seek re-instatement, but may prevail on grounds that there was no cause for her dismissal, rather than on the basis of whether the superintendent had to provide the names of all qualified applicants to the school council.

- About 260 schools have made principal selections to date and only 4 or 5 have reported problems.

CONCLUSION:
When school councils hire principals, superintendents can withhold names of applicants whom they do not recommend.

B. AS COUNCILS CONSULT WITH THE PRINCIPAL IN THE SELECTION OF OTHER STAFF MEMBERS, CAN SUPERINTENDENTS WITHHOLD NAMES OF APPLICANTS THEY DO NOT RECOMMEND (KRS 160.345(5)?

CONCLUSION:
OAG 95-10 states that "qualified applicants" means "all persons who meet all qualifications set forth by statute, regulations, and school board policies." To be qualified an applicant must meet minimum certification requirements, have a satisfactory criminal records check, and meet other qualifications established by the local board for a particular job classification.

Local boards of education may establish policies that provide "objective criteria affecting the minimum job qualifications for a job classification."

Superintendents have the responsibility to ascertain that an applicant has met the minimum legal qualifications and any qualifications established by school board policy, but do not have the authority to create additional job qualification criteria.

The attorney general's opinion goes on to state that superintendents do not have to submit the entire list of "qualified applicants" initially. "If requested by the school, the superintendent must continue to supply available names until the field of `qualified' applicants is exhausted...The superintendent is not allowed to withhold applicants...based on his or her subjective considerations...This does not mean that the superintendent is denied the opportunity to render subjective comments and recommendations..."

ADDITIONAL QUESTION:
Can a school board establish additional qualifications for local school positions?

Yes. OAG 95-10 states that a "local school board's personnel policies may set forth objective criteria required for a particular job classification." The opinion goes on to reiterate that boards are prohibited from becoming involved with individual hiring decisions and thus must be careful to set forth objective criteria in setting forth qualifications.

III. ISSUES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SBDM BY JULY 1, 1996 AS MANDATED BY KRS 160.345(5):

A. WHAT TYPES OF SCHOOLS ARE COVERED?

DISCUSSION:

- The law says "all" schools shall implement SBDM and an OAG says that "all" schools must comply which includes alternative schools and special schools. This is problematic in schools designated as A2 through A6 as students in these schools are more likely to transfer

frequently, and parent elections and membership on councils is extremely difficult.

- The School for the Deaf and School for the Blind have voluntarily adopted school-based decision making and are currently working out an arrangement with the State Board.

CONCLUSION:

All schools, including A2-A6 schools must establish school-based decision making as recommended by a recent opinion of the attorney general. A Program Review, 95-SBDM-149, prepared and distributed by the Department of Education suggests that how an A2-A6 school implements school-based decision making is determined by the local board of education in its SBDM policies. Two options are suggested including having the school establish its own council or allowing the school to function under the auspices of a council in an affiliated A1 school.

RECOMMENDATION:

The law should be amended to give the State Board the authority by regulation to exempt schools that are "not held independently accountable. . ." for school performance.

B. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A SCHOOL TO IMPLEMENT SBDM, I.E. WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES ARE COUNCILS REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT?

ISSUES:

- The lack of a definition of noncompliance is a problem for KDE and OEA with regard to what to do if schools are not exempt and do not implement SBDM.
- Does implement mean performing all 19 "shalls" listed in KRS 160.345? There is disagreement on this issue. Some believe a council can choose the areas in which it wishes to establish policy.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. A Program Review, 95-SBDM-149, prepared by the Department of Education suggests that schools required by law to implement school-based decision making but that have not done so by July 1, 1996, cannot make decisions about such things as curricular and instructional materials, hiring, and staffing plans without a decision of the school council.

2. School councils can adopt policies in areas where they are not comfortable creating new policy, by allowing former procedures to continue or adopting school board policies. For example, a council could require that the budget be handled by the principal or that the staffing pattern remain as it was in the prior year.

C. HOW WILL THE OPT-OUT PROVISIONS BE CONSTRUED, I.E. MUST A SCHOOL ESTABLISH A COUNCIL, ACHIEVE ITS THRESHOLD LEVEL, AND THEN OPT OUT OR CAN A SCHOOL THAT HAS MET ITS THRESHOLD OPT OUT BEFORE FORMING A COUNCIL?

CONCLUSION:

If a school does not wish to implement SBDM and is exempt because of test scores, it need only vote to opt out and apply for its exemption.

IV. HOW IS THE LANGUAGE RELATING TO MINORITY REPRESENTATION INTERPRETED, I.E. AS PER KRS 160.345(2)(b)(2)(a)? WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE AS PER KRS 160.345(2)(b)(2)(b)? WHAT SHOULD OCCUR IF THE ONLY MINORITY TEACHER IN A SCHOOL DOES NOT WISH TO SERVE ON THE COUNCIL?

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Parents of minority students can vote. It is not a requirement of the statute that a parent be a minority as

long as his or her child is a minority. This follows OAG 94-60.

2. If minority teachers choose not to serve on the council, the statute is silent as to any alternative procedure. Therefore, there is a vacancy until a minority teacher agrees to serve.

3. If there is no minority teacher, the teachers in the school elect one additional teacher representative.

V. HOW SHOULD THE TERM "RELATIVE" AS FOUND IN KRS 160.380 BE INTERPRETED?

DISCUSSION:

- If a parent has an aunt, uncle, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law who is employed by the district, they are prohibited from serving on a school council but if they have a niece, nephew, mother-in-law, or father-in- law employed in the district, they are not.

RECOMMENDATION:

KRS 160.380 should be amended to include niece, nephew, daughter-in-law and son-in-law. (KASA does not believe the nepotism provisions are needed in the law and therefore disagrees with this recommendation.)

ADDITIONAL ISSUES:

- Parents are ineligible to serve as school council members if they have relatives employed in the district. This restriction does not apply to teachers.
- In small school districts, the number of persons interested in serving as parent members of councils is limited when the school system is the largest employer.
- There is a court case in Floyd County that may provide answers to the question of differing eligibility requirements for parents and teachers.

CONCLUSION:
In Floyd County, the Circuit Court has ruled that the law establishing eligibility requirements for parents is unconstitutional. This decision has been appealed.

VI. WHAT ROLE DOES A COUNCIL PLAY IN HIRING ITINERANT TEACHERS?

DISCUSSION:
An itinerant teacher is defined as someone who is not exclusively at one school.

CONCLUSION:
Itinerant teachers are selected and assigned by the district.

RECOMMENDATION:
Superintendents should solicit input from school councils when hiring an itinerant teacher for that school.

VII. A. HOW CAN COUNCILS BE FULLY AWARE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMPLYING WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS PROVISIONS OF KRS 61.800?

DISCUSSION:

- It is believed that some councils may not be complying with the open meetings laws due to lack of information.
- The penalties for noncompliance could include the following:
  Any formal action of a council that is made in a meeting that does not comply with the open meetings laws could be voided.
- Individual members of a public body or committee may be fined up to $100 for each violation of the open meetings laws.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Councils must be informed about proper procedures to comply with the open meetings and open records laws. They should also be made aware of penalties for noncompliance.

2. Sources of good information are available from Synergy, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, Prichard Committee resource books, and an attorney general pamphlet.

RECOMMENDATION:

Further discussion needs to focus on other possible formats for this information and ways to get it to councils.

B. WHAT IS A SCHOOL COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY WITH REGARD TO THE OPEN RECORDS LAW?

CONCLUSION:

Councils are responsible for:

- keeping minutes of its meetings;
- appointing an official custodian who is responsible for the records;
- adopting policies to allow access to records and requestsfor copies of records, including fees for copies, and
- displaying its open records policies in a prominent location accessible to the public.

Appendix III

Recommendations from *The Implementation of Kentucky's Primary Program** Institute on Education Reform University of Kentucky

- Elementary schools should assess the variation in implementation of primary program components from classroom to classroom and design strategies to support the development of key program components not being implemented. Within each school the experience and expertise of teachers who are achieving success should be a primary source of professional development for other teachers.

- Elementary schools should examine their curricula for alignment with Kentucky's Learning Goals and Academic Expectations. Professional development activities should be planned to ensure that learning activities in all classrooms support the expectations and standards for which schools are held accountable.

- Elementary schools, with assistance from their own district, the Department of Education, and Kentucky institutions of higher education, should plan for focused professional development in key areas:

  1. Integrating the curriculum:
     a. focused on Kentucky's Learning Goals.
     b. using broad-based themes and units.
     c. increasing the time and quality of science and social studies instruction.
     d. including instruction in the arts.

  2. Building teachers' repertoires of instructional strategies to address students'varied learning styles and needs.

3. Involving students in planning and assessing their own learning.

4. Using a variety of authentic assessment measures.

- The Kentucky Department of Education in cooperation with local school districts should identify classrooms where teachers are using the most promising practices related to the key components of the primary program and establish them as sites for other teachers to visit. Teachers with success in implementing the primary program should be utilized more effectively in professional development activities. (The Kentucky Education Association's "Teachers to the Power of Two" program is one excellent model.)

***Taken from Bridge, Connie, *The Kentucky Institute for Education Research: The Implementation of Kentucky's Primary Program*, a report of research conducted by the Institute on Education Reform, University of Kentucky, 1994.**

Appendix IV

Report of the Governor's Task Force on Teacher Preparation

December 13, 1993

INTRODUCTION

The implementation in 1990 of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) heralded new expectations for all students, schools, and school districts. Likewise, it brought about new expectations for the teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel who staff the schools. Recognizing the importance of providing appropriate KERA-related training for both practicing and prospective educators, Governor Brereton C. Jones, on July 13, 1993, established the Task Force on Teacher Preparation to:

- review current practices in preparing Kentucky teachers, review related national and international trends, and, with the assistance of expert educational consultants as the task force deems necessary, to develop policy recommendations which will promote and support a model of teacher preparation which is in keeping with the learning goals and outcomes delineated in KERA.

The task force held six meetings, the purposes of which were to identify goals and priority issues relative to preparatory programs, and to develop recommendations for change for submission to the Governor and the 1994 General Assembly. Frank Newman, Executive Director, Education Commission of the States (ECS), and Calvin Frazier, Consultant for ECS, served as discussion facilitators during several of the meetings. A public hearing on the Task Forces' recommendations was held on November 4, 1993.

Task force members took seriously their charge to be action-oriented in their deliberations regarding how best to ensure that public school personnel are well-equipped to address the myriad of new responsibilities inherit in KERA. To this end, many of the recommendations contained herein will necessitate revolutionary thinking about preparatory programs, about the institutions which offer them, and about the education profession in its entirety. The task force appreciated this opportunity for interaction and debate, and is hopeful that its work constitutes a foundation upon which to build a "world- class" education workforce for the 21st century.

GOAL I: ***The preparation of teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel should be aligned with the goals and objectives of KERA.***

PRIORITY ISSUE: PREPARATORY PROGRAMS

Background Information:

The current system of teacher/administrator/certified non-teaching personnel preparation requires colleges/universities and local school districts to establish training programs based on specific curricula regulated by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB). In addition, institutions must meet standards relative to faculty, students, resources, and collaboration with the public schools which are identical to those established by the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education. The credentials of all candidates for teacher/administrator/non-teaching personnel certification, even those from out-of-state, are reviewed against EPSB degree program outlines, which designate required coursework.

The task force believes that persons graduating from colleges/universities with education degrees should bring into the schools the most current knowledge and "best practices" (i.e., practices that improve student performance) to promote the six learner goals established in KERA. To this end, teachers, administrators, and non-teaching personnel in Kentucky should be certified only when they successfully complete a formal assessment

based on the performance outcomes established by the EPSB. Similarly, programs to prepare these individuals should have high standards for faculty and students; should ensure that instruction emphasizes interaction between the training institutions and the schools, and should view academic expertise as central to effective teaching.

Recommendation 1:

The EPSB shall work in consultation with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE), the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the colleges/universities, and the local school districts to develop Experienced Teacher Outcomes, Education Administrator Outcomes, and Certified Non-teaching Personnel Outcomes, ensuring that these outcomes are modeled after the already approved and disseminated New Teacher Outcomes, that they distinguish between the new/provisional level of proficiency and the professional and mastery levels, and that they are disseminated to the higher education institutions and the schools by July 1994.

Recommendation 2:

By July 1994, the EPSB, in consultation with the SBESE and the CHE, shall establish criteria for the school-based clinical preparation of teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel. These criteria shall be based on the best practices nationwide. Successful KERA schools shall be the only training and research sites for clinical experiences.

Recommendation 3:

Beginning January 1, 1994, the EPSB, in consultation with the CHE, shall review all existing education preparation degree programs to determine which programs at each institution best serve the needs of KERA, the need for on-going improvement of professional practice in Kentucky, and the need to reduce critical shortages in areas identified annually by the EPSB (e.g., minority, special education, and technologically-proficient certified educators).

Recommendation 4:

By March 1, 1994, the SBESE shall report to the EPSB and CHE on the areas of expertise in which practicing teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel should gain increased proficiency (e.g., subject matter, technology, leadership) as evidenced via need surveys. The EPSB and CHE, in cooperation with the colleges/universities, shall ensure that these areas are adequately addressed in the curricula of preparatory programs, and shall monitor institutional and student performance in these programs.

PRIORITY ISSUE: HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

Background Information:

The current higher education funding approach, which was developed in 1982-83, is primarily enrollment-driven, is based on the concept of "common funding for common activities," and affords money only for current, not planned, activities. Support rates for education credit hours are among the lowest in the funding formula. Concurrently, the state's limited general fund revenue necessitates that recommended changes in the funding approach be effected using reallocation of existing university resources, rather than relying on a large infusion of new funds into higher education.

As evidenced in its policy documents, the CHE supports restructuring of higher education programs and activities designed to prepare school personnel and/or to assist local school districts. Likewise, it recognizes that implementation of these policies will result in the need for increased support for KERA-related activities at the state's public universities. The task force endorses the CHE's commitment to the following principles:

- Given that education reform is important to the state, and that the system of higher education has been and may continue to be constrained financially, institutions choosing to continue offering teacher preparation programs shall provide adequate financial support for these programs.

- The funding formula generates support in recognition of the basic expectations for operating programs to prepare school personnel. Changes in the structure of these programs as necessitated by KERA (especially the increased use of practicums, internships, and field-based experiences) shall be considered in the comprehensive funding approach review which follows the 1994 session of the General Assembly (as mandated by KRS 164.020[4]).

- A more detailed, in-depth evaluation of the appropriate level and type of support for education reform efforts shall be included in the next comprehensive formula review.

- Available technology (e.g., interactive video) shall be used to implement new teaching strategies.

Recommendation 5:

By January 1, 1994, each institution (public and private) shall clearly indicate its intent to continue or discontinue its teacher education program. A decision to continue this program shall be contingent upon the institution's designating teacher education as a program priority, with concomitant commitment of resources to adequately support the program. Procedures to assess the level of commitment of resources to teacher education programs shall be established by the EPSB, in cooperation with the CHE and the colleges/universities.

Recommendation 6:

The public higher education funding approach shall be revised following the 1994 session of the General Assembly to reflect the following:

- the refined mission of each institution, respective of each institution's role in and prioritization of teacher education programs;

- performance-based measurement (e.g., student assessment, job placements, and service to local school districts) developed by the CHE and used as the basis for funding universities;

- the policy objectives of the Governor's Task Force on Teacher Preparation, specifically as they relate to inclusion of the EPSB's performance outcomes and the interactive model of teacher training envisioned by KERA;

- the encouragement of quality rather than quantity in the recruitment of students for teacher education programs, and

- the provision of incentives to universities to undertake state-funded KERA research projects.

Recommendation 7:

The 1994-96 CHE funding recommendation shall be based on policy objectives of the Governor's Task Force on Teacher Preparation rather than on the current funding approach.

GOAL II: ***High standards of performance should be expected of all educators at all levels.***

PRIORITY ISSUE: ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND CERTIFIED NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL

Background Information:

Currently, Kentucky requires the successful completion of the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) or the Kentucky Principal Internship Program (KPIP) before a regular teacher or principal certificate is issued. There also exist Principals Assessment Centers and Superintendents Training Program and Assessment Centers. Completion of training/assessment programs at these centers is required by statute, but is not tied to certification.

For new teacher candidates, the formal assessments required by the EPSB include:

a. a grade-point average (GPA) of 2.5 and an American College Testing (ACT) exam score of 21 prior to acceptance into teacher education at a college or university. [Note: The average ACT score in Kentucky is 20.]

b. a bachelor's degree from an approved teacher education program, a 2.5 overall GPA, satisfactory completion of student teaching, and passing grades on the National Teacher's Exam (NTE) core battery and teaching specialty tests prior to acceptance into KTIP. [Note: The passing scores on the NTE correspond to approximately the 10th percentile on national norms.]

For new principal candidates, the formal assessments required by the EPSB include:

a. three years' teaching experience, a master's degree, passing scores on the NTE core and administration/supervision specialty test, and a passing grade (85 percent correct) on the Kentucky Administrators' Test. [Note: The passing scores on the NTE correspond to approximately the 10th percentile on national norms.]

b. during the KPIP experience, three performance observations during the principal's first year, conducted by a 3-member panel using an observational assessment instrument.

All superintendents are required to complete a training, and assessment program operated by the KDE. Training must address core concepts of management, school-based decision making, Kentucky school law, Kentucky school finance, and curriculum and assessment. At the conclusion of the training, each superintendent must complete a written comprehensive examination based on the content of the training.

The task force believes that, relative to all professions (e.g., medicine, law, education), the state has the responsibility to ensure at least minimum proficiency via independent entry level (i.e., provisional certification) assessments, and that, in education, such assessments also should be used in designating professional and mastery levels of performance. Preparatory programs should thus provide continual assessment of their students so as to inform them of progress towards success. Likewise, school districts should use on-going performance assessment as an integral component in tenure and promotion decisions.

The assessment of proficiency, whether for certification in teaching, administration, or non-teaching fields, should include a measurement of subject matter specialization and expertise, as well as acceptable performance in a KERA setting. To this end, the EPSB should establish challenging academic standards and authentic assessment tasks. Additionally, professional educators should demonstrate good moral character, and the EPSB should therefore continue to enforce the Code of Ethics for Professionals. Finally, higher education and school district training programs should provide developmental, life-long learning opportunities so that educators may maintain and improve their expertise and proficiencies.

The quality of the assessments used to measure the aforementioned aspects of the education profession are critical to the system's credibility. The task force therefore believes that the assessment system should be made accessible to and equitable for all; it should render results which are valid, reliable, and related to national norms, and it should be authentic to Kentucky KERA settings. To facilitate the on-going oversight and upgrading of this system, each candidate for certification should be required to pay an assessment fee.

Recommendation 8:

By January 1, 1996, the EPSB shall establish and operate, in cooperation with institutions of higher education, Kentucky Educator Certification Centers to measure the expertise and proficiency of those applying for entry-level (i.e., provisional) or advanced (i.e., professional or mastery level) certification as teachers, administrators, or non-teaching

personnel. The EPSB shall define the expected performance outcomes and the assessments to measure these outcomes. The EPSB shall develop procedures to ensure that the assessments are valid, reliable, equitable, accessible to all, related to national norms, and authentic to Kentucky KERA settings.

Recommendation 9:

The EPSB, in consultation with the CHE and the colleges/universities, shall establish continuous assessment programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels as based upon the EPSB-approved performance outcomes for new and experienced teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel. These assessments shall include demonstrated proficiency in KERA goals, on performance in the classroom setting, and in "best practices" of the profession.

Recommendation 10:

The SBESE shall report annually to the EPSB and CHE regarding the "best practices" in Kentucky schools and expected new developments. The EPSB, in cooperation with the CHE, the institutions of higher education, and the public schools, shall ensure that all preparatory programs are revised to support these practices. The EPSB shall ensure that performance assessment tasks required for certification accurately reflect these practices.

PRIORITY ISSUE: ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING STRATEGIES AND LEARNER OUTCOMES

Background Information:

Under current state statutes, all university personnel matters, including promotion and tenure policies, are the exclusive purview of the university governing boards. The CHE's current program approval authority also is contained in state statute, and relevant 5-year review policies include requirements for reporting outcome measures for all existing programs. Annual accountability reports on the quality and effectiveness of higher education are prepared by the

CHE and the universities. The first such reports are due December 1993.

The task force believes that the CHE and EPSB should be authorized to review the tenure and promotion policies of colleges/universities offering education preparatory programs, specifically with regard to the importance accorded quality teaching and service to the schools. Likewise, these institutions should ensure a campus-wide, comprehensive approach to promoting student-centered teaching and measuring learner outcomes, and should implement an on-going series of measurements which address students' academic and pedagogical proficiency.

Recommendation 11:

A university choosing to train teachers, administrators, and/or certified non-teaching personnel shall adopt KERA principles of good teaching and conduct performance evaluations of all university faculty. Since teacher education majors take many, if not most, of their courses outside the colleges of education, systemic changes in collegiate teaching shall be required. When redefining the standards for good university teaching practices, parallels shall be drawn to the dramatic changes in public school teaching resulting from KERA's implementation. The university shall, by July 1994, submit to the CHE assurances of KERA's application in teaching strategies across campus, or a transition plan to revamp teaching methods university-wide, and shall provide adequate professional development opportunities for faculty to make the adjustments in their teaching styles necessary to reflect the principles of KERA.

To reinforce the aforementioned changes in teaching and learning, the EPSB, in consultation with the CHE and SBESE, shall develop for statewide use by July 1996 a primarily performance-based assessment to determine the eligibility of college students and others to be admitted to teacher education programs.

Recommendation 12:

New standards of practice, developed collaboratively by the CHE and EPSB, shall be mandated to ensure that public universities (and their

faculties) engaged in the training of educators comply with the expectations of KERA. The following standards shall establish the minimum conditions required of a university choosing to offer preparatory programs:

- visibly making teacher, administrator, and/or certified non-teaching personnel preparatory programs an institutional priority for programmatic as well as funding purposes;
- providing a campus-wide commitment to active modes of student-centered teaching for all programs, and formally documenting this commitment in the university's strategic plan, with compliance measured via the CHE's program review process;
- making institutional reviews of teaching quality a major component in the program review process;
- incorporating quality instruction and service to the schools as meaningful components of faculty promotion and tenure policies, to be considered on par with research;
- establishing for all programs minimum expectations for learner outcomes, with measurements developed as part of the campus-wide assessment program, and making these outcomes subject to CHE and EPSB review based on protocol developed jointly by the CHE and EPSB's in cooperation with the colleges/universities;
- measuring, at set intervals, student outcomes in relation to expected outcomes for each degree program, using the results in the continuous improvement of programs, and reporting results in the CHE and EPSB's program review and accountability processes;
- including the best practicing public school teachers and administrators in collegiate training programs.

Recommendation 13:

University education programs that do not comply with the aforementioned criteria within a timeframe set by the EPSB in consultation with the CHE shall have their approval of these programs revoked by the CHE and EPSB. Revocation procedures shall be incorporated in the CHE and EPSB program approval and review policies.

Recommendation 14:

Programs to prepare teachers/administrators/certified non-teaching personnel as offered by private institutions shall be subject to similar criteria. If these institutions wish to continue their programs and be approved by the EPSB, they shall be required to submit to EPSB program reviews similar to those conducted for the public universities. Furthermore, they also shall demonstrate campus-wide commitment to active teaching and learning modes, including promotion and tenure policies that reward good teaching practices and service to the schools.

GOAL III: ***Certification should be streamlined and should be accessible from a variety of routes.***

PRIORITY ISSUE: STREAMLINING CERTIFICATION

Background Information:

In Spring 1993, the EPSB approved the following four levels of teacher certification: birth to primary, primary through grade six, grade five through grade nine, and grade seven through grade twelve. The current system also differentiates among at least 156 certification categories, each specifying its own course requirements.

Colleges/universities develop individual training programs, basic and advanced, to meet certification requirements. These programs are approved by the EPSB on the basis of input criteria such as course offerings, field placements, standards for admissions, number of library books, faculty qualifications, and resources.

The task force believes that the goals and objectives of KERA necessitate recognition of demonstrated expertise (i.e., outcomes) as equally valuable to courses taken (i.e., inputs). Thus, the performance and academic outcomes specified by the EPSB for new and experienced teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel should identify the state's expectations and should, in turn, provide direction for the training institutions. The certification system, itself based on these expected outcomes, should drive the necessary transformation of preparatory programs' structure and content.

The task force also believes that KERA's implementation gives new emphasis to governance via local decision making. Flexibility in certification is therefore necessary in order to meet the needs of individual school instructional programs. The preparation of educators should become a joint effort between higher education and the schools, with colleges/universities choosing to offer only those preparatory programs for which they have adequate resources and personnel, and by which they can make the most significant contribution to the education reform movement in Kentucky.

Recommendation 15:

By June 1995, the EPSB shall have in place a streamlined, KERA-based certification system, birth through grade 12. The number of basic certificates shall be reduced to four (i.e., teacher, principal, superintendent, and certified non-teaching personnel), and the number of certificate categories shall be reduced by at least 75 percent. The EPSB, in cooperation with the SBESE and the CHE, shall specify the depth and breadth of subject matter expertise required to support the curriculum offered in the schools, and shall define the certificates required to support the instructional programs.

Recommendation 16:

The EPSB, in consultation with the CHE, shall work cooperatively with colleges and universities to specify those undergraduate and graduate training programs leading to certification which are of priority in support of KERA and which meet critical shortage needs statewide.

with emphasis on the recruitment and retention of minority candidates. Each institution shall provide a plan and assume responsibility for phasing out those specialties for which it is not able to offer adequate support. The EPSB and CHE shall work cooperatively with the institutions to ensure that programs in all certification areas are available to and reasonably accessible geographically and/or technologically by persons throughout the state.

Recommendation 17:

The EPSB shall ensure that assessments conducted via the Kentucky Educator Certification Centers become the means by which candidates for certification are evaluated relative to subject matter expertise and performance outcome levels, and shall ensure that the assessment instruments allow for valid, reliable, and equitable demonstration of proficiency.

PRIORITY ISSUE: ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION

Background Information:

Current alternative certification programs in Kentucky are of limited impact because the existing statute and regulations for implementing them are very restrictive and prescriptive. Entry criteria are difficult to meet, especially by those who have discontinuous academic backgrounds, and the specificity of the curriculum follows traditional patterns of training.

The task force believes that implementation of KERA has made obsolete the defining of educator preparation in terms of specified sequences of coursework. Rather, of critical importance today is assessing each prospective educator's academic and pedagogical competencies, and then affording him/her the most effective and efficient avenue for reaching the proficiency necessitated by KERA. Certification for teachers, administrators, and non-teaching personnel, therefore, should be outcomes-based, and should recognize that expertise must not always be achieved via traditional modes of training and the earning of degrees.

Recommendation 18:

The EPSB, in consultation with the CHE and the SBESE, shall establish alternative certification programs aligned with the goals and objectives of KERA and designed to meet statewide needs.

GOAL IV: ***Certification and compensation should be tied to performance***

PRIORITY ISSUE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Background Information:

Professional development for teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel presently is tied to locally developed plans, the focus of which is on what educators need to know in order to support local implementation of KERA. The task force believes that transforming the total educational system, birth through post-secondary, is the ultimate goal of KERA, and that the expertise and skills of the professional staff who serve in this system are essential to reaching this goal. Just as instruction should be developmentally appropriate for young people, so it also should be developmentally appropriate for adults, including those in education. In meeting the individual needs of teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel, training institutions should ensure that their professional development and advanced training offerings are consistent with best practices, are research-based, and reflect the goals and objectives of KERA. To meet Kentucky's current need for massive professional development and training, collaboration among colleges, universities, schools, and communities is critical.

Recommendation 19:

The SBESE, in consultation with local school districts, shall work to ensure that the New/Experienced Teacher Outcomes, the Education Administrator Outcomes, and the Certified Non-teaching Personnel Outcomes developed by the EPSB serve as the basis for individual professional development plans. Significant emphasis should be placed on long-term training experiences. The EPSB, in consultation with the

CHE, the higher education institutions, and the local school districts, shall identify those colleges/universities at which professional development is a high priority, and these institutions shall design KERA-related, school-based, long-term collaborative training and research programs based on best practices and leading to advanced certification/degrees.

Recommendation 20:

The EPSB, in consultation with the CHE and the colleges/universities, shall work to ensure that the Experienced Teacher Outcomes, the Education Administrator Outcomes, and the Certified Non-teaching Personnel Outcomes developed by the EPSB are the standards for approval of advanced education certification (i.e., professional and mastery levels), administration certification, and degree programs at colleges and universities. By July 1994, the EPSB, in consultation with the CHE and the higher education institutions, shall identify those colleges/universities at which advanced educator/administrator preparation is a higher priority, and these institutions shall design KERA-related, school-based, long- term collaborative training and research programs based on best practices and leading to advanced certification and/or degrees. Also, the EPSB, in cooperation with the CHE and the colleges/universities, shall develop a policy for approval of advanced educator/administrator preparation programs which requires continuous assessment on the outcomes and on KERA expectations.

PRIORITY ISSUE: COMPENSATION

Background Information:

The task force believes that KERA, by its emphasis on performance-based outcomes, has rendered the current system of compensation obsolete. Subject matter expertise and performance of teachers, administrators, and certified non- teaching personnel should be assessed and documented, and should serve as the basis for continued employment and compensation decisions. Years of experience and additional college hours should be irrelevant to the decision-making process unless they serve to significantly enhance the educator's role in the classroom and in the school. Conversely,

successful performance on expected teacher/administrator/certified non-teaching personnel outcomes should be valued highly and rewarded as such.

Structuring compensation systems that are tied to expertise and performance outcomes require trust in the assessment criteria. Developing assessments that are valid, reliable, equitable, and accessible to all is therefore critical. Agreement on the expected outcomes is only a first step. Assessments also should delineate levels of performance, with rewards based on achievement of same. Reaffirmation of certification should be granted to only those personnel who are "professionals," and significant salary differentials should distinguish those who are at the mastery level. All continued employment and compensation decisions should be integrally related to the development and on-going revision of individual educator professional development plans.

Recommendation 21:

All interested constituent groups (e.g., Kentucky Education Association, Kentucky Association of School Administrators, Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, Parent-Teacher Association) should submit to the Governor, no later than July 1, 1994, their recommendations as to how best to address, on a scheduled basis, the need for reaffirmation of certification, said recommendations to be discussed in the interim in preparation for the 1996 General Assembly.

Recommendation 22:

Recognizing the SBESE's responsibility to develop a compensation plan, the SBESE is urged to (1) tie compensation to performance, and (2) phase out the master's requirements.

ACTION NEEDED

In order to implement and accomplish the above recommendations, the task force suggests that the Governor recommend to the 1994 General Assembly that it enact a Kentucky Teacher Education Reform Act to:

- recognize the EPSB-approved New/Experienced Teacher Outcomes, the Education Administrator Outcomes, and the Certified Non-teaching Personnel Outcomes as the standards for certification and for approval of higher education and local school district preparation programs in Kentucky;

- designate an authority to determine an adequate number of clinical training and development sites in successful KERA schools distributed across the six Congressional districts, where professional development offerings for degree programs will be provided on-site by faculty assigned to these sites;

- designate an authority to establish KERA school-based clinical training and development councils to coordinate research projects by higher education and public school faculties, and to provide training programs in the schools for higher education personnel relative to KERA goals, objectives, and practices; (The councils should work in cooperation with the school-based decision making councils.)

- designate forgiveness loan funds for students enrolled in degree programs in critical shortage areas in any Kentucky public or private college or university;

- require the EPSB to establish a KERA accountability index for training programs, as well as for clinical training and development sites, which addresses, at a minimum:

  --performance of graduates on initial assessments,
  --performance of graduates on internship assessments,
  --performance of graduates on advanced assessments,
  --number of graduates employed in critical shortage areas, and
  --number of minority graduates.

  This index should be used to monitor institutional and student performance for the purpose of program approval, and EPSB should make this information available to the public;

- require the EPSB, in consultation with the colleges/universities and the schools, to develop valid, reliable, equitable, and authentic performance-based educator assessments, and to include state and national expertise in the development process as necessary;

- establish Kentucky Educator Certification Centers, in conjunction with the institutions of higher education, for the purpose of testing all candidates for certification relative to their expertise and performance in accordance with the outcomes and assessment tasks approved by the EPSB;

- require the EPSB to set admission and performance standards at levels that systematically increase the quality of certified personnel over the next five years;

- establish a task force to define standards for continuous assessment in pre-service, internship and in-service programs, to be composed of representatives from the EPSB, the CHE, the SBESE, college/university training programs, and the public schools;

- enable the CHE and EPSB to review higher education tenure and promotion policies with regard to how quality teaching and service to the schools are rewarded; (These policies should be applicable to all faculty in institutions offering education preparatory programs.)

- authorize four basic certificates (i.e., teacher, principal, superintendent, and certified non-teaching personnel), with specialization categories to be defined by the EPSB; (Those who hold certificates at the time this act is enacted should be allowed to renew said certificates; those persons who have earned credit in an approved college/university program leading to certification should be allowed to complete said program within three years.)

- ensure adequate state and institutional funds for the preparation of professional educators, particularly for addressing areas of

critical shortage, including minority teachers, administrators, and certified non-teaching personnel;

- supersede the existing alternative certification statute and stipulate:

  --that alternative certification programs be available statewide for teachers, administrators, and/or certified non- teaching personnel, and that they be accessible both to practicing educators and to those outside the profession,

  --that persons be admitted to alternative certification programs on the basis of at least an earned baccalaureate degree and expertise demonstrated via performance outcome measurements,

  --that persons enrolled in alternative certification programs may be employed by school districts under the supervision of certified personnel,

  --that a significant portion of each alternative certification program be conducted at established KERA clinical training and development sites,

  --that persons completing alternative certification programs be evaluated at the Kentucky Educator Certification Centers, and that they be expected to meet the same performance and expertise criteria as those completing more traditional preparatory programs,

  --that a plan be devised to encourage selected university involvement in alternative certification, that establishment of an alternative certification program be contingent upon submission of a proposal for EPSB approval, and that all alternative certification programs either be operated by colleges/universities or demonstrate significant involvement of higher education in their development and implementation, and

  --that only successful KERA schools/school districts be permitted to operate alternative certification programs; and

- recognize and provide significant salary increases for mastery-level educators in the public schools.

Appendix V

Suggested Modifications in the Recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Teacher Preparation

The teacher preparation task force report covers a lot of territory and addresses key issues relevant to reconfiguring teacher and administrator education in Kentucky. It can become an influential document when developed into legislation and practices.

Suggested Changes and Cautions

It is important to insure that teachers trained in Kentucky are aware of the goals and objectives of KERA and capable of teaching youngsters in ways that enhance their opportunities to be successful on the KIRIS assessments. However, in fulfilling this goal, there is a danger that programs will become too narrowly focused. More particularly, there is the possibility that the KIRIS outcomes as tested, rather than KERA goals more broadly drawn, will drive teacher education. This would be a mistake.

Recommendation: Legislation that describes the charge to teacher education institutions should be explicit in describing broad KERA goals and in distinguishing them from KIRIS. Criteria for accrediting the preparation institutions, similarly, should reflect broad goals with respect to areas of knowledge and skill and the pedagogues that might be employed to accomplish them.

Recommendation 2 under Goal I in the report states that only "successful" KERA schools can be teacher and administrator training sites for clinical experiences. The intention is to place prospective teachers and administrators in settings where they will have good opportunities to learn. The assumption is that "successful" will be a proxy for such a setting.

Yet, the recommendation raises several questions. To begin with, what does "successful" mean in this context? Is it a school that has met its benchmark on KIRIS? Is it something else? If it is connected with KIRIS, it is possible that a school might be successful one year and unsuccessful the next.

What might that variation mean for a school's role as a training site and for the establishment of some professional training relationships and capacities at the site? (My concern here is about the potential for instability in clinical training sites and the enormous amount of work that would then be involved each year in developing new sites.)

Pursuing this line of questions a bit further, what if there is a terrific program or team of teachers in an otherwise "unsuccessful" school? What if a school, for example, has an outstanding special education component in an otherwise unsuccessful school? Would a prospective special education teacher be denied a clinical experience in the site? What if a school is moving forward with excellent leadership, but is not yet successful? Might that school be a good training site for future teachers and administrators?

Recommendation: The word "successful" needs definition, and it is important to define it in ways that do not exclude sites that are good for particular learning experiences. The process of developing the definition of successful might best be informed by a careful discussion of what it is that practitioners need to learn in their clinical experiences and what characteristics a training site needs to have to promote such learning. It may be useful, at the same time, to consider whether "successful" is the best word to use when describing potential clinical sites.

Goal II calls for the implementation of high standards of performance for educators at all levels. This could be extremely useful, but leads to several questions.

First, what ideas about teaching practices, and what assessment instruments will guide the development of the parameters and indicators of "high standards of performance" that will inform the work of the

Kentucky Educator Certification Centers, for example. The concern here, again, is that broad KERA goals will be translated into too narrow a set of acceptable practices; that acceptable practices may be too tightly tied to beliefs about how to increase KIRIS scores rather than to ideas about education outcomes construed more broadly.

Second, the report's use of the term "best practices" adds to concern in this regard. Many of the current teaching strategies promoted in Kentucky and across the nation remain untested in large scale reform. We know that they are effective when used by teachers who find them compatible and whose subject matter knowledge is deep; we are less sure how to teach people to teach in these ways if they are not already doing so, and we do not yet know the extent of the practices' effectiveness across a wide range of children. We support the implementation of the teaching reforms, coupled with careful research; but, as Kentucky implements the current version of "best practices," it should adopt a cautionary, inquiring stance appropriate to the depth and breadth of the knowledge base guiding the implementation.

Recommendation: Given the combination of very high hopes and expectations for new teaching practices coupled with the limited scope of knowledge and experience in using them, implementors of this report should avoid writing assessment criteria that a) overspecify acceptable teaching practices, and b) push the colleges and universities and the public schools toward adopting a "one best system" approach to pedagogy. Implementation should explicitly leave room for alternatives, and provide for evaluation that can inform further implementation.

The report correctly notes that college teachers of core academic subjects do not always teach with strategies encouraged by KERA. Too often, their pedagogy rests heavily on lectures, and does not encourage students' active participation in constructing their own subject matter knowledge. (The same can often be said, unfortunately, about those who teach the teacher education courses.) The merit of traditional college teaching is increasingly under question, but traditions of autonomy with respect to teaching are deeply ingrained at the post-secondary level. Therefore, although I strongly agree with the recommendations for changes in college teaching in academic areas so that prospective teachers

a) come to deeply know their subject matter, and b) experience it taught in ways they might well adopt for use K-12, the report's recommendation should not be implemented as written even though the goal is commendable.

Fundamentally, the report does not reflect sufficient awareness of a) the massive staff development effort that would be required for this enterprise; b) the absence of trained personnel who could provide the staff development if the requisite, extensive resources were available, and c) the potential for teacher education to be held hostage by faculty in the arts and sciences who may not be primarily invested in the preparation of teachers, and who, therefore, have little incentive to change their ways of teaching to facilitate program accreditation.

Recommendation: Begin the effort to change college teaching by involving, first, those faculty members who want to improve/change/diversify their teaching repertoire. This might involve the colleges in providing some kind of minimal incentive system for participation. Such incentives might be considered as one indicator of the institution's commitment to teacher preparation. Second, continue the effort in the process of recruiting new faculty. Colleges, as part of the faculty search process, might include specific criteria that relate to teaching (and go beyond the teaching evaluations collected from the candidate's current institution). Third, when new faculty join the college, the college might include professional development with respect to teaching, as part of its on-going effort to support the newcomer. In this way, some long-standing faculty members might become involved in improving their teaching; the institution would be giving an explicit message about its teaching priorities by investing in new faculty, and the overall effect could be a change in the culture of teaching in the college and an improvement in learning.

This document was prepared for the Prichard Committee by Barbara Neufeld, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, December 6, 1994.

Appendix VI

Case Studies

Ft. Knox Dependent Schools

Situation: Because they are Department of Defense schools, Ft. Knox schools experience a student mobility rate of 30 to 40 percent. The traditional school calendar did not accommodate such a high rate of student change.

Action: The superintendent began investigating voluntary year round school, and appointed a staff person to form a planning committee to conduct a thorough investigation of restructuring time. The planning committee was all- inclusive; members included teachers, administrators, central office personnel, school board members, and parents, including some who were "dead set" against changing the school calendar. The committee used a variety of methods, including parent surveys to determine the community's interest in restructuring the school calendar.

Solution: Based on community surveys, two Ft. Knox elementary schools converted to year round calendars in 1993. These schools adopted the 45/15 plan which means school is in session 45 days (nine weeks) and out of session 15 days (three weeks) throughout the year. The total number of days was unchanged.

Outcomes: The two year round Ft. Knox schools report:

- Reduced need for extensive review because of shorter breaks.
- More timely remediation during the intersessions.
- Increased teacher morale.
- Increased professional development opportunities for teachers
- Increased planning time for teachers.
- Parents able to plan creative vacations in the off-seasons.
- Facility managers able to plan patterned schedules for building maintenance.

Engelhard Elementary School

Situation: Two years ago, Engelhard Elementary looked at its test scores and realized the school's expectations of high student performance had not been achieved.

Action: An all-inclusive planning team of parents, business and community people, teachers, and administrators met together to look at barriers to Engelhard's success. The majority of identified barriers centered around the issue of time. The team looked at other schools and businesses for models of how time could be restructured.

Solution: Engelhard now serves as the Jefferson County Public School Model Year Round Education Site. Students and staff attend school four days per week, Tuesday through Friday, 45 weeks per year for a total of 177 academic days. The fifth day program, held on Mondays, is optional and provides child-centered enrichment and tutoring programs. The year round calendar provides four days at Thanksgiving, two weeks of winter break at Christmas, one week of spring break, and five weeks of summer vacation. Eighty-five percent of Engelhard's students voluntarily choose to participate in the Monday program.

Outcomes: Since implementing the year calendar, Engelhard has experienced the following differences: higher test scores, improved teacher and student morale, increased parental involvement, improved attendance, and fewer behavioral problems.

Jessamine County Schools

Situation: Two situations brought about change in the Jessamine County school system: 1) the building of two new facilities—a high school and a middle school and 2) continued rapid growth in the community. It seemed an opportune time to investigate new ways of restructuring instructional programs using time as the variable. Student achievement was foremost in all decisions.

Action: An education program committee looked at this new opportunity. The committee's recommendations for restructuring time were distributed to schools and school councils, and debate proceeded. The middle school task force, with one teacher from each content area, discussed block scheduling. The task force looked at block scheduling as one way to restructure time to improve student achievement by increasing the depth of the core curriculum.

Solution: At a later point, parental input was sought and block scheduling approved for implementation in the fall of 1995.

Outcome: Jessamine County schools are now considering a 45/15 extended year plan.

Bardstown Independent Schools

Situation: Bardstown Independent Schools began investigating restructuring when they learned that, with the traditional school calendar, students spend three of their 13 years in school in review. This means that students receive ten years of "real learning" out of the 13 they spend in school.

Action: A Year Round Education Study Committee investigated 14 studies that looked at student performance in relation to restructuring. In an effort to make the research/planning process as inclusive as possible, the committee held 32 public meetings with groups having some relation to the Bardstown schools. This included parents, teachers, business people who employ students part time (fast food restaurants, hospitals), and tourism officials.

Solution: The school district decided on a 45/15 year round calendar. A modified version will be implemented the first year (1995-96). If successful, full implementation will take place in 1996-97.

Outcomes: The following are lessons the Bardstown planning committee learned in their process to restructure:

- A planning committee should allow 18 to 24 months of study before submitting recommendations.

- Commitment from professional school staff should be secured before recommendations are taken to the public.

- Establish a formal process of open meetings to include school board members, teachers, council members, community leaders, students, and special interest groups.

- Expect and tolerate opposition. This is a cultural change for the school and the community.

- Avoid the term "year round school." The perception is that students will go to school 365 days a year with no breaks. Present it as an alternative calendar or alternative schedule.

Murfreesboro City Schools

Situation: The Murfreesboro City School System responded to 1978 Tennessee legislation that encouraged the use of public school facilities for care of children before and after school.

Action: School board members and the superintendent saw the unlimited service an extended school program could provide for students, parents, and the community.

Solution: Currently there is a school-based Extended School Program (ESP) in all eight Murfreesboro City Schools. ESP operates daily year round, including snow days, teacher in-service days, and during the summer. Centers are closed only for major holidays.

The program is organized so students and staff get the most out of after-school hours. Organized activities include violin, guitar, and art instruction, computer training, foreign language experiences, and planned homework time with trained personnel to help students.

In addition to the planned activities, ESP children can also participate in afternoon movies, crafts, ballet, keyboarding, Brownies, Boy Scouts, and 4-H work at no additional cost.

Outcomes: The programs are self-supporting financially, with family discounts available. The Murfreesboro City Schools Extended School Program has become a state model for innovative, cost-efficient programs that serve business, community, and student needs.

Frankfort Independent Schools

Frankfort Independent Schools became interested in restructuring when they learned that year round school 1) offers the benefit of continuous learning, 2) eases student and teacher stress, 3) offers the opportunities for enrichment programs, and 4) allows for more timely, focused remediation.

A planning committee visited several districts that have implemented year round school. The committee then held six parent forums and two public forums where the topic was discussed. Every student in grades 7 through 12 was invited to discuss the possibility of calendar changes with the superintendent. It was felt that if students are resistant to the change, the parents will not accept it.

Frankfort Independent Schools voted to use a 45/15 concept of year round school and anticipate the following benefits:

- Improved attitudes of teachers and students.
- Enrichment programs above and beyond what can be offered within the constraints of the traditional calendar.
- Better, more timely remediation

Challenges were related to family vacation and work issues.

Appendix VII

Research on homework shows that:

- Homework, if commented upon or graded, benefits achievement and attitudes.
- Daily homework shows larger positive benefits than occasional assignments.
- Graded homework produces an effect on learning that is three times that of social class.
- Students complete more homework when assignments are closely related to course work and class time is spent reviewing it.
- Elementary homework is more effective if it focuses on establishing good student habits and promoting skills.

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